THE

THEATRICAL INQUISITOR;

FOR

JANUARY, 1820,

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LONDON:

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TO WHOM ALL COMMUNICATIONS, POSTAGE PAID, ARE TO BE ADDRESSED.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

THE SUNDAY MONITOR.—We have a rod in pickle for the low-minded editor of this loathsome journal, who had better get his head shaved before the appearance of our next number, by the "prize hair-cutter" if he pleases, to prevent another ebullition of outrageous frenzy.

Our apologies must still be made to I. B. B. for the postponement of his poetical contributions.

We cannot lay our hands upon the manuscript alluded to, for return, by JAMES; but it shall be duly forwarded at the first opportunity.

By a curious oversight, our remarks upon the Covent-garden pantomime of "Harlequin and Don Quixote; or, Sancho Panza in his Glory," have been omitted in their proper place, and are here presented to the reader:

SATURDAY *January* 1.—This is certainly an ingenious production, for nothing but ingenuity of no common order, could have separated the renowned history of "Don Quixote" from every prescriptive claim to interest and amusement. This task, however, has been effected, and the present pantomime evinces to what a pitch of exquisite dulness the most invincible emanations of humour may be carried. It exhibits a splendid succession of local scenery, but is so wretchedly put together in the whole of its collateral requisites, that not even the substitution of GRIMALDI's freaks as *Clown*, for his eccentricities in *Sancho*, could alleviate the censure it still continues to receive.

The paper replying to a theatrical article in GOLD and NORTHHOUSE's "London Magazine," came too late for publication in our present number, were we even disposed to accept it. As a proof that our contempt for the Drury-lane management is founded upon the just grounds of public injury, we shall insert this letter with unqualified readiness, if upon proper consideration it seems fit for perusal.

To such remarks as those supplied, more than once, by W. I. B. it is our wish to pay prompt and implicit attention. With regard to denominating the volume now completed, the first of a new series, we regret that no arrangement of our plans will authorize that measure, which by the way might be obviated by so lettering the book, when bound, if unaccompanied by the whole series of its predecessors.

Various provincial favours are in hand, which we must beg our correspondents to remodel, from the circumstance of unavoidable delay. QUEME will oblige us by a continuation.

Our next "General Review" will comprize Miss BENGER's "Life of Tobin," the "Irishman," a comedy by Lady CLARKE, the English version of PORSON's "Euripides," "Impartial Observations" on the proceedings instituted by the two Theatres Royal against the minor establishments.

It is with extreme regret that our Review of the King's Theatre, and the Minor Drama, is delayed from inevitable want of room.

HEWITT, Printer, 145, HIGH HOLBORN.

Painted by S. De Wilde. *Engraved by Chas. Picart.*

Mr. Bannister as Gradus, in Who's the Dupe.

Engraved for the Theatrical Inquisitor.

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THE

THEATRICAL INQUISITOR,

FOR

JANUARY, 1820.

Memoir of Mr. Bannister.

——in his commendations I am fed;
It is a banquet to me.—SHAKSPEARE.

THE life of an actor is seldom marked by adventure, though replete with many little anecdotes of gaiety, privation and intrigue. The career of Mr. JOHN BANNISTER has been peculiarly separated from every painful distinction, and we feel considerable pleasure in admitting that the narrative of his theatrical efforts is undistinguished by those topics of amusement, which sometimes result from unparalleled debasement, and extreme distress.

Mr. CHARLES BANNISTER, so long and so deservedly a favourite with the London public, was married at a very early age to a lady still younger than himself. The subject of this article was the first pledge of their mutual affection; and, within a few weeks of his birth, Mrs. BANNISTER beheld her unborn infant, in a dream, dancing a hornpipe upon the head of GARRICK. It was a whimsical conceit, and deserves to be recorded as an amusing feature of our hero's very barren biography.

Young BANNISTER had no sooner attained the power of speech, than he became the echo of his father, from whom, having watched him while studying his parts, he caught up a variety of dramatic fragments, and retailed them to the infinite diversion of his parents and their visitors. At the tender age of four years, his talents were called into systematic exertion, and he charmed an audience at Ipswich by performing little *York* in SHAKSPEARE'S "King Richard the Third."

On this budding hope Mr. CHARLES BANNISTER bestowed a decent education, and at that time of life when a profession is usu-

ally sought for, consulted his inclinations, and found they tended to painting. In consequence of an application to GARRICK, he interceded with Mr. DE LOUTHERBOURG on his behalf, and to the tuition of that artist he was in consequence very speedily submitted.

At this juncture, too, he obtained the more immediate patronage of GARRICK, who saw such theatrical promise in his look and deportment, that after hearing him recite certain passages from SHAKSPEARE, he urged him to adopt the stage as a professional pursuit, and even offered to write a part expressly for him in the "Maid of the Oaks," a piece then preparing with wonderful brilliancy beneath his peculiar auspices. BANNISTER, true to his inherent bias, withstood the strong temptation, expressed a modest doubt of his ability to represent character upon the stage, and therefore adhered to his original desire of pourtraying it upon canvass.

The payment of two hundred pounds, the sum agreed on between DE LOUTHERBOURG and the father of his pupil, was urgently demanded, and circumstances rendering a fulfilment of this solicitation not only inconvenient but impossible, young BANNISTER soon became tired of his tutor, soured, doubtless, by neglected stipulations, and before six months had elapsed in his novel employment, a circumstance occurred to emancipate him from the pursuit of any other but his destined profession.

MR. DE LOUTHERBOURG had formed a collection of old armour and warlike implements, gathered from all parts, and arranged with great attention. To this assemblage of rusty accoutrements his pupil clandestinely repaired, and though upon forbidden ground, gratified his curiosity by gazing at the venerable memorials, and inflamed his martial ardour by wearing them. He fitted himself, piece by piece, with a coat of mail, and thus equipped, strutted about the armoury with all the enthusiasm of its original wearer. In replacing these reliques he unfortunately forgot the precise order from which they had been taken, and his visits were consequently detected. This transgression was added to others, and his father not finding it suitable to soften down the painter's asperity by the only application that could remove it, directed his son to return home, and thus dissolved the bright visions of pictorial splendour.

TO BE CONTINUED.

Antient Drama.

No. V.

A SHORT time previous to the reformation, JOHN HEYWOOD, a noted jester, enlarged the limits of dramatic poetry, by producing his "Interludes," which deviated entirely from the common scriptural foundation, and were built upon a satirical view of contemporary manners. The play called the "Four Ps," may perhaps be considered as the earliest of these productions; it was printed, in 4to, black letter, about the year 1533,* and bears the following title:

A NEWE AND A VERY MERY ENTERLUDE OF A PALMER, A PARDONER, A POTICARY, A PEDLER.

So little improvement had been made in the method of opening our theatrical pieces, that the present interlude begins with precisely the same rudeness that distinguished its predecessors.† One of the *personæ*, a *Palmer*, abruptly comes forward, and having made a sudden salutation, prefers a laconic inquiry, and then narrates his adventures:

Now God be heer. Who keepeth this place?
Now, by my faith, I cry you mercy:
Of reason I must sue for grace,
My rudeness sheweth me so homely;
Whereof your pardon askt and wun,
I sue now, as curtesy dooth me binde,
To tell this, whiche shal be begun,
In order as may come best in minde.
I am a Palmer, as you see,
Whiche of my life muche part have spent
In many a far and fair countrie,
As pilgrims doo, of good intent.

The narrative of his travels is then pursued, with amazing volubility, to a peculiar extent; he affects to have seen Noah's ark "on the hils of Armeny," and after recounting a heterogeneous catalogue of places, concludes with the annexed declaration of his pious purpose in making them the objects of a toilsome journey:

* We are aware that this drama is undated, but as four, out of six, of this author's interludes were printed in 1533, we think ourselves warranted to deduce the present production from at least as early a period.

† *Vide* "Hycke-scorner;" Vol XV. page 301.

To these, with other many one,
Devoutly have I prayed and gone,
Praying to them, to pray for me,
Unto the blessed Trinitie,
By whose prayers, and my dayly pain,
I trust the sooner to obtain,
For my salvacion, grace, and mercy.
For, be ye sure, I think assuredly,
Who seeketh saints, for Christes sake,
And namely suche as pain doo take,
On foote to punishe their fraile body,
Shall therby merite more hiely,
Than by any thing doon by man.

Here the *Pardoner* interposes, without the slightest announcement, and deprecates the utility of pilgrimage, though especially exempting the religious motives that lead to it. He then incites the *Palmer* to recount his journies, and roundly reproves him for neglecting the passport that, as a *Pardoner*, he could have vended him, to the kingdom of heaven:

Now is your own confession likely
To make you, [Palmer,*] a fool quickly,
For I perceive you would obtain
No other thing for all your pain,
But only grace, your soule to save.
Now mark in this what wit ye have,
To seek so far, and help so nie:
Even heer at home is remedy.
For at your door my self doth dwel,
Who could have saved your soule as aswel,
As all your wide wandring shall doo,
Though ye went thrice to Jerico.
Now, since ye might have sped at home,
What have ye wun by running to Rome?†

In his reply, the *Palmer* adjudicates this question by denying its previous inference, and declares, that

Right seldom is it seen, or never,
That truthe‡ and Pardoners dwel together.

* We are responsible for this interpolation, which seems necessary to complete the metre.

† So undecided has the pronounciation of this word prescriptively been, that in a previous line it is even written for the opposite sound:

Yet have I been at *Room* also.

‡ This is the first instance of moral personification in the whole course of dramatic poetry.

the *Pardoner* rebuts this abuse, by insinuating a suspicion that his opponent is not perfectly sober, and charges him with falshood in the history of his "voyage." He then reiterates his boast, that "pardons," such as he is selling, are fully equal to the attainment of their ostensible aim, and that for "a penny or two pence," by virtue of their efficacy:

> ——as soon as the soul departeth hence,
> In half an houre, or three quarters at moste,
> The soule is in heaven with the Holy Ghoste.

The *Poticary*, at this juncture, comes forward, "by stelth," and jeeringly asks of these disputants, if they send "any souls to heaven by water?" He also undertakes, by permission of the audience, to prove them "false knaves bothe," in hoping to secure their salvation by erroneous expedients, denies their title to the dispensation of eternal bliss, and maintains his own claim to that honour, by instancing the many deaths that result from his professional help. There is a vein of forcible satire in the whole of this speech, which we feel ourselves bound to transcribe:

> All soules in heaven having releefe,
> Shall they thank your crafts? Nay, mine, cheef.
> No soule, ye knowe, entreth heaven gate.
> Til from the body he be separate,
> And whom have ye knowen die honestly,
> Without the help of the Poticary?
> * * * * *
> Since of our soules the multitude
> I send to heaven, when all vewd,
> Who should but I then, all togither,
> Have thank of all their coming thither?

The arguments of this pretender are so vigourously resisted by his companions, that he pronounces an unfavourable sentence against their several pursuits, which is hastily caught up by the *Pedler*, who arrives to dispose of the wares in his pack. The various articles he has to offer are detailed with considerable spirit, and in the course of his enumeration, he lanches the following shaft at his most sanctified hearer:

> Is there nothing for my father Palmer?
> Have ye not a wanton in a corner,—
> For all your walking to holy places?
> By Christe, I have heard of as straunge cases.

A very licentious colloquy then occurs upon "women's matters,"

which is marked by many humourous allusions, though the indelicacy of their texture will not permit us to adduce them. The *Pedler*, "though this journey acquite no coste," is solicitous for a little pastime, and follows the *Poticary* in trolling some popular catch. At its conclusion the *Pardoner* reverts to his quarrel with the *Palmer*, and also lays the *Poticary's* arrogant assumption before the *Pedler*, to whose judgment their claims upon precedency are submitted.

The *Pedler* suggests "some maner of thing" in which the hostile parties are equally proficient,

> And in the same who can do best,
> The other twain to make them prest,*
> In every thing of his intent,
> Wholy to be at commaundement.

Lying is the "maistry" selected by this umpire for the ordeal of supremacy, since all three

> ——————can lie as wel,
> As can the falsest devil in hel;

and though grudging, in greater topics, to be the arbiter of their pretensions, he consents to preside over this trial, from a consciousness of consummate skill in the subject of proof, and avows his determination to regulate their predominance with rigid impartiality.

After much desultory matter,† it is agreed that each person "one tale shall tell,"‡ and whosoever can violate truth to the most marvellous extent, shall be considered as the winner of this casuistical victory. The *Poticary* commences, and relates a fiction,¶ which is highly commended by the umpire; the *Pardoner* succeeds him, and details his adventures in a journey to hell, for the purpose of redeeming a departed soul. His description of the fiends upon a festival is jocularly written:

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* *prest*] i. e. *ready*.

† In the course of which, the *Pardoner* produces a variety of relics, and among them some yeast,

> Which on the drinck at the wedding was
> Of Adam and Eve, undoubtedly.

‡ one *tale*] i. e. one *lie*. This sense is familiar to SHAKSPEARE and many other antient writers. It also occurs in some of our early statutes upon the subject of libel, and in confirmation of that authority it may be remarked, that the *Palmer* does not recount a "tale," but merely advances a surprising assertion.

¶ This fable, though not destitute of humour, is too indelicate for quotation,

This devil and I walked arme in arme,
So far til he had brought me thither,
Where all the devils of hel togither
Stood in aray, in suche apparel
As for that day there meetly fel.
Their hornes wel gilt, their clawes ful clene,
Their tayles wel kempt, and, as I ween,
With suthery butter their bodies anointed;
I never saw devils so wel appointed.

His description of Lucifer, in an amiable mood, deserves to be extracted:

He smiled on me welfavouredly,
Bending his browes, as brode as a barn doore's;
Shaking his eares, as rugged as burres;
Roling his eyes, as round as two bushels;
Flashing the fire out of his nosethrils;
Gnashing his teeth so vaingloriously;
That me thought time to fall to flattery.

This "prince of hel" accedes to his suit for the release of "Margery Coorson," in the following satirical manner:

Now, by our honour, said Lucifer,
No devil in hel shall with holde her;
And if thou wouldst have twentie mo,
Wer't not for justice, they should go,
For all the devils within this den
Have more to do with two women,
Then with all the charge we have beside;
Wherfore *if thou our freend wilt be tride,*
Apply thy pardons to women so,
That unto us there come no mo.

The *Pardoner* extracts her from the kitchen,—

For Margeries office was therein,

and having restored her to existence, concludes his extravagant narrative. The *Palmer* enforces his claim to superiority, by the following outrageous observation:

His tale is alle muche perilous,
But part is muche more mervaylous;
As where he said the devils complain,
That women put them to suche pain.
Be their conditions so crooked and crabbed,
Frowardly fashioned, so wayward and wrabbed,
So far in devision, and sturring suche strife,
That all the devils be wery of their life?
Thus, in effect, he told of trueth;

Wherby muche marvel to me ensueth,
That women in hel suche shrewes can be,
And heer so gentle, as far as I see.
Yet have I seen many a mile,
And many a woman in the while;
Not one good cittie, town, or borough,
In Christendome, but I have been thorough,
And this I would ye should understand:—
I have seen women five hundred thousand,
And oft with them long time have taried,
Yet in all place where I have been,
Of all the women that I have seen,
I never saw nor knew, in my conscience,
Any one woman out of patience.

This falshood obtains the *Pedler's* sanction, and after sundry bickerings between the various parties, who are inflamed with exultation, envy, and resentment, some very powerful incentives to real piety are delivered, and the piece concludes with a prayer for the propagation of Roman catholic doctrines.

John Heywood, who chased the bible from the stage, and supplied it with our earliest representations of domestic manners, was born, it is presumed, about the beginning of the sixteenth century. By medium of sir Thomas Moore, he procured the patronage of princess Mary, and was honoured, in consequence, with the favour of king Henry VIII. who frequently rewarded him for the amusement he derived from his musical skill, and delectable jests. On the accession of king Edward VI. he continued in favour, and when Mary ascended the throne, his star was so peculiarly propitious, that even upon the death-bed of that gloomy woman, he was permitted to approach and entertain her. On the death of his patroness, he went into voluntary exile, and having settled at Mechlin, in Brabant, died there in the year 1565.

That Heywood was not a "bigoted" papist, as his biographers assert, we think there is ample evidence, in the drama before us, most decisively to conclude. His satire is unsparingly directed against the rude excesses of catholic christianity, and though a *zealous* adherent to his habitual mode of worship, he should not surely be burthened with a heavier charge. Apprehensive, it may be, that measures of rigourous retaliation would be inflicted by Elizabeth, or under her auspices, upon those who had prospered amid the cruelties of the preceding reign, he retired for the security of his person, we will admit, but not for the indulgence of his religion.

Heywood had flourished, we must remember, while the reformation went forward under Henry and his successor, a clear proof that temporal comfort was the height of his ambition, and the boundary of his wishes.

Heywood's talent for raillery is evinced in various parts of this interlude with considerable success, attributing their occasional coarseness to the rude era in which it was composed. The morality of "Hycke-scorner," upon the spirit of which we expatiated in our last, is written with strong marks of his distinctive manner, and the commendation bestowed upon the leading features of that humourous effort, will attach, with singular felicity, to the present production.

The play called the "Four Ps," says the editor of "Cibber's Lives," exhibits "in its title page, the pictures of four men in old fashioned habits, wrought off from a wooden cut." They are indubitably meant to pourtray the *four* characters comprised in this piece, and as specimens of antient theatrical costume, must be valuable offerings to antiquarian curiosity.

MANAGEMENT OF DRURY-LANE THEATRE.

TUESDAY, *January* 4.—A meeting of the proprietors was convoked for the nomination of a General Committee, and a Subcommittee; and also to consider of the pending application to Parliament for a new act to amend and explain two former bills.*

Mr. Ward, the secretary, having read an advertisement, by which the assembly was convened,

Mr. Calcraft, being called to the chair, detailed the objects upon which it was invited to deliberate. The application to Parliament was made with a view of realizing those hopes held out to the renters at the commencement of this season, by enabling the executive branch of the proprietary to exercise such functions for their benefit as hitherto it had been unable to assume. No additional expense, from this projected measure, would devolve upon the parties it was framed to protect, nor would the interests of the bondholders or new renters be affected by its operation. He was em-

* Mr. Calcraft brought up the Report of the Committee on the Drury-lane Theatre Act, and obtained leave to bring in a bill for carrying that Report into effect.—"*Parliamentary Debates;*" *Dec.* 23, 1819.

powered to state, that so far as the season had already proceeded, the hopes adverted to were in the fairest train of fulfilment. The talents, punctuality, and attention of the lessee, left them nothing to wish for, and Mr. CALCRAFT indulged the most sanguine belief, that at the close of the season, he should be able to lay before his hearers a statement of the concern and its circumstances, fully equal to his most auspicious conclusions.

Mr. MITCHELL submitted a motion, in approval of the objects for which the meeting had been called, that was ultimately adopted; Mr. CALCRAFT, in reply to a proprietor's question, declared that the new-renters would come in with their claims before the bond-holders; Mr. G. H. ROBINS, the auctioneer, passed a panegyric upon the present mode of managing the Theatre, and the meeting was dissolved.

Correspondence.

TO R. W. ELLISTON, ESQ.

———*Moniti meliora sequamur.*—VIRGIL.

SIR—As an ardent admirer of the drama, and being anxious to see Drury-lane Theatre restored to its former state of prosperity, I take up my pen to address you upon a point of the greatest importance to your reputation and interest, as manager and lessee of that splendid establishment.

When the proprietors announced your nomination to the occupancy of their Theatre, I indulged a hope, from the professions you have invariably made, that few deficiencies would be suffered to exist in that branch of the drama which had been principally neglected. Tragedy, I joined in the general hope of again seeing with renovated success; your pledges were passed for "extensive preparations" to "support it with due credit," but those pledges have been so deplorably redeemed, that the public mind is replete with no other sensations than disappointment and disgust. Your laboured openings have produced nothing but ridiculous imbecility, and though I will not venture to insult you with a classical extract, yet permit me to remark how completely the old adage of the mountain and the mouse has been verified by your pompous abortion!

Is your tragic company a jot stronger than it was seen last

season beneath the truckling measures of a parsimonious Committee, who, to gratify the hurtful ambition of one pampered actor, or realize the stupid dictates of Mr. Peter Moore, made all their arrangements upon the principle of barren mediocrity.* While the brilliant abilities of Young, C. Kemble, Macready, and Miss O'Neill were devoted to tragedy at the rival house, these inveterate blunderers shut their eyes against the influence of fortunate combination, and thought the popularity of Mr. Kean sufficient to maintain the attraction of Shakspeare and Massinger, without a single assistant of comparative value.† The results of this contemptible scheme were plainly evinced by bankrupt resources, and exhausted credit, though, You, sir, are pursuing the very path that led to undying disgrace, and irretrievable ruin!!!

I am unwilling to wound the feelings or weaken the welfare of any individual attached to your company, but justice compels me to ask upon what grounds Messieurs Thompson, Foote, and many others, have been held out for public contempt, as auxiliaries to your tragic drama? Why was Mrs. Glover exhibited in *Lady Macbeth*, what are Mr. Penley's pretensions to *Macduff*, and by whom were *you* persuaded, in a moment of peculiar dotage, to put on the buskin for *Richmond*, without adhering, in the slightest particular, to the letter or spirit of that heroical part?‡

Much has been said upon the subject of "large letters," in

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* Witness the engagement of Miss Smithson, Miss Cubitt, Mr. Watkinson, &c. and the discharge of Miss Kelly, Dowton, Munden, and others of *expensive* retention.

† Mr. Rae, it must be remembered, though an actor of many valuable attributes, was completely superseded by Mr. S. Kemble's disgraceful exaltation of his boisterous son.

‡ Among many curious aberrations, the following are recorded upon undeniable authority. Towards the conclusion of the tragedy, in lieu of saying,

Pray tell me,—is young George Stanley *living?*

Mr. Elliston unfortunately asked,

————is young George Stanley *missing*,

to which Mr. Powell, who represented the youth's most affectionate father, replied with stoical accuracy,

He is, my liege, *and safe in Leicester town.*

Nor did the joke finish here, for on being reminded of his egregious error, the magnanimous lessee, on a subsequent evening, exclaimed with triumphant fervour,

————is young George Stanley *slain?*

which certain names of superior importance were *starred* by special agreement. You have "taken suggestion as a cat laps milk," and withdrawn your own claims to that puerile distinction, for which a very warm acknowledgment is due to the hundred-and-ninety-ninth page, in Number 87, of this didactic miscellany. I trust that the childish vanity of those by whom the practice is still adhered to, will be speedily gratified, and that even Mr. KEAN, the chief patron of stupendous capitals, may be ultimately taught to rest his fame upon more reputable expedients.

To the talent of your comic performers I most zealously subscribe, regretting, however, that no actress of inherent gentility is at hand to strengthen the phalanx of their congregated power; for your melo-dramatic department, such an artist as HUNTLEY, or rather T. P. COOKE, is also indispensibly required, and the lavish liberality of public patronage demands their immediate procuration.

From a belief that the sentiments I have expressed are sanctioned by the majority of your supporters, I feel confident that you will honour them with appropriate attention, and remain, sir, &c.

December 11, 1819. CHILO.

REPORTED ABUSES.

To the New-made Manager of a Patent Theatre.

MY DEAR BOB—Your reputation is made too much my own, from the memory of antient fellowship, to be assailed with impunity while I have a word to utter in its defence. Pray then oblige me by your answer to the following queries, which are circulating with an assurance of authenticity that nothing but your downright denial can disprove.

After *strongly advising* Miss CAREW, on Saturday, the 27th of November, in consequence of an insuperable hoarseness, to keep away from the Theatre, at night, though announced for *Lady Elinor* in the "Haunted Tower,"—a part performed, as her substitute, by Miss CUBITT,—were you treacherous enough to *fine her* TWELVE

when "lo you now!" master POWELL replied, as before, with cruel punctuality,

He is my liege, *and safe in Leicester town.*

O, reader, reader, but that the great ELLISTON is instanced by every familiar as a perfect pattern of sobriety, who would not exclaim, when his laughter had subsided, what a marvellous ebullition of brandy and water!!!

POUNDS for having listened to your earnest persuasions?

Have you been so puritanical as to take half-a-guinea from Mr. HAMBLIN for laying a wager behind the scenes?

Are all salaries to be stopped in case of sickness, however short its duration?

Was Mr. KEELEY removed from the character of *Bailie Mucklethrift*, because, against all honest expectation, he refused to sing in your untunable chorusses?

Remember, BOB, that I solicit explanation upon these points for your sake, and not mine, being unable to endure the disgrace such slander, if uncontradicted, would attach to your established honour, and proverbial liberality.

I remain, dear BOB,
Ever yours,

January 1, 1820. TOM GAGG.

P. S. Say, at the same time, if your quarterly instalment of old W's annuity was paid in cash, or by *a promissory bill for five pounds.*

ATTEMPT TO SUPPRESS THE MINOR DRAMA.

To the Editor of the Theatrical Inquisitor.

SIR,—It having been signified by a notice to me from the two Theatres Royal, signed, on the part of Covent-garden, by Mr. HARRIS, and on the part of Drury-lane, by Mr. WARD, the Secretary of the Committee of Management, that an attempt is about to be made to deprive the public of a very gratifying portion of their amusements, by reducing the present performances of the Coburg and similar Theatres "to inexplicable dumb-shew;" I beg through the medium of your Magazine, to offer a few remarks to the public on the right of the Managers of the Patent Theatres to take a step so manifestly at variance with justice, and so ungracious towards that patronage which as well supports their efforts as those of the Minor Theatres. Independently of having embarked a large property in the establishment of the Coburg Theatre, which has long been the acknowledged nursery of rising merit, and the asylum of neglected talent, a property, which the step about to be taken by the proprietors of the Patent Theatres, would put at stake; I am bound by every sense of gratitude for the generous encouragement afforded

my efforts to resist any attempt tending to abridge the choice of the public, and by excluding them from the enjoyment of Minor Theatres, compel them to put up with any entertainment, however insufficient, the Patentees of the Royal Theatres may choose to offer. The license under which the Coburg and Theatres of a similar description are open to the public, is an annual one, granted under the authority of an Act of Parliament of the 25th of George II. by a full bench of magistrates, of the county in which the Theatre is situate, and expresses to be for the performance of entertainments of music and dancing. Under this license, (which is a general license, and under which all species of entertainments are tolerated, none other ever having been granted) the performances of the Coburg Theatre have been invariably represented and regulated; every piece brought forward has been studiously made a vehicle for the introduction of music and dancing; a regular ballet company has been engaged, together with many singers of the first eminence. No one can contemplate for a moment that by the words "Music and Dancing," actors like Messrs Booth, H. Kemble, Barrymore, Mrs. Stanley, &c. &c. whom an existing agreement between the two Theatres, that any actor who may be discharged from one Theatre shall not be engaged at the other for one twelvemonth, has shut out from the Patent Theatres, should be obliged to sing all they may have to say; such at least has never been the opinion of the very intelligent and respectable magistrates under whose authority the Coburg Theatre is open to the public; they have repeatedly sanctioned my performances by their presence, and at all their annual meetings hitherto held for the purpose of granting a renewal of mine and similar licenses, have never expressed the slightest opinion that such performances have exceeded the limits of their license; on the contrary, they have invariably caused an insertion to be made in every renewal, that the same species of performances were to be continued as had been represented the preceding season. The entertainments brought forward at the Coburg Theatre, consonantly with those of its neighbours and rivals, the Surrey and Amphitheatre, and which are now for the first time complained of, have not only been approved by the repeated visits of many of the most distinguished members of the Royal Family, and all the first characters for rank, knowledge, and worth in the kingdom, but have even been acknowledged by the silent consent of the Patent Theatres for a long series of years. If they are illegal, and

illegal they must be, should they be deemed proper subjects for information, fine, and suppression, it will appear strange that such a discovery should not have been made before, but should only be brought forward by the Patentees of the Royal Theatres, at a moment when by such a discovery they may reduce hundreds to poverty and ruin. By an impartial and moderate calculation, the number of persons actually dependant for support on the Coburg, Astley's, and the Surrey Theatres, amounts, with their families, to no less a number than 3,000 individuals; a number exceeding those engaged in the Theatres Royal by some hundreds;—saying nothing of those persons who derive their support from the Olympic, Adelphi, Regency, Sadler's Wells, and East London Theatres. With what face, therefore, the Patentee and Proprietors call for the utter ruin of such a number of meritorious individuals, deriving the support of themselves and families from their talents and industry, the public must decide. They cannot say the Minor Theatres are objects of minor importance in the amusements of the public, and employment of talent—they perhaps may urge, as in a recent instance, when they attacked the Olympic and Sans Pareil Theatres, impugning the powers of their own licensing authority, the lord chamberlain, that the Minor Theatres affect the well-doing of the Patent Theatres; that there is not a sufficient audience in London, Westminster, Southwark, and their environs, to fill more than the two Royal Theatres; but they will be defeated as they have been before. The fallacy of such an allegation will appear in a moment by a comparison between the number of Theatres, and the amount of population in London and Paris, were it not contradicted by the complainants themselves, who, in the daily bills they issue to the public of their transactions, have repeatedly stated their houses to be overflowing, notwithstanding the pretended drawbacks of the Minor Theatres. In Paris, there are open, nightly, no less than twenty-five Theatres, all well attended; in London, never more than eight. The population of Paris is computed at 600,000; that of London exceeds 1,500,000. The inference may easily be drawn. The melo-dramatising and performing of "Richard the Third," at the Coburg, for the purpose of displaying the great talents of Mr. Booth, is, it seems, the offence that has thus suddenly drawn down the hostility of the Major Theatres. For the doing this, I had good precedent. The present Lessee of Drury-lane Theatre at the time he rented the Surrey Theatre, melo-

dramatised both "Richard the Third" and "Macbeth," as well as many other pieces of the Royal Theatres. "Richard the Third" was melo-dramatised expressly for the Coburg Theatre, with additional musical scenes, and an immense reduction of matter, by Mr. Moncrief, who is regularly engaged at the Coburg Theatre, to arrange and adapt all such pieces as may be produced there. I have no wish to persist in availing myself of any *materiel* belonging to the Royal Theatres, nor should I have done so in the present legal instance, had it not been with a view to gratify the public by as complete a display of Mr. Booth's fine talents in *Richard* as the nature of my license permitted. I willingly withdraw it, if they consider its performance an injury to them; but when they modestly ask me, late on Saturday night, to withdraw a new piece announced for representation on the succeeding Monday, a piece written expressly for my Theatre, and in the production of which I have expended a sum amounting to nearly fifteen hundred pounds, as in the case of the "Horatii and Curiatii," the splendid success of which has redoubled their efforts, I should be wanting in every proper feeling of duty to myself, should be guilty of a breach of faith to the public, if I did not manfully resist so unreasonable a demand. The magistrates, under whose license I act, are empowered by the Act of Parliament to license scenic representations at their own discretion; they have done so at their matured and repeated discretion; and I feel persuaded they will not impugn their own judgments, nor deteriorate their own power and authority, by complying with the unjust and selfish wishes of the Patentee Proprietors, who, having by every species of illegitimate representation, rope-dancers, jugglers, dogs, and horses, lowered the dignity of their own establishments, deem every effort of the Minor Theatres to rationalize their entertainments an offence against the goddess of folly, and resolving to prove true votaries of their reigning deity, denounce the exertions of intellect as a crime, call upon the constituted authorities of their country to check the growth of improvement, and while assuming to be patrons and protectors of the drama, prove its bitterest enemy. I regret the limits of a letter will not permit me to enter on the wide field of decisive discussion this subject opens to me; but my adversaries may be assured I come fully armed to combat all that the sophistry of their legal advisers, founded on the precedents of less enlightened times, may furnish them with; and that assured by the strong hold of custom,

the sanction of a discerning public, and the authority under which I act, I am resolved to dispute with them every inch of what I conceive to be my just ground of right. In a future communication I will essay to shew, that whatever distresses the Royal Theatres may have fallen into, they have been rather indebted for them to their own mismanagement than to any detracting force of the Minor Theatres.

I am, Sir, &c.

J. GLOSSOP,

Proprietor of the Royal Coburg Theatre.

General Review.

The Comedy of Errors, in five acts, with alterations, [and] ***additions; and with Songs, Duets, Glees, and Chorusses, selected entirely from the plays, poems, and sonnets of*** SHAKSPEARE, 8vo. *pp.* 86.—LOW.

IT appears from the advertisement to this alteration, that "the admirers of SHAKSPEARE having long regretted that most of his lyrical compositions *have* [had] never been sung in a Theatre, the 'Comedy of Errors,' one of the shortest and most lively of his comedies, *has been* [was] selected as the best vehicle for their introduction." It is then asserted in the same flimsy manner, that "a few additional scenes and passages were absolutely necessary for this purpose;" and these suppletory *addenda*, it is hoped "will be readily pardoned," as being calculated to enrich the acting drama with "more of the 'native wood-notes wild' of our immortal bard."

That any *real* "admirer" of SHAKSPEARE ever languished for the object which Mr. REYNOLDS has been pleased to describe, we most indignantly deny, for the enamoured votary of youth and innocence would as soon consign them to the gripe of prostitution, as a fond lover of Shakspearean beauty desire to behold it in the embraces of the stage. A literary pandar, however, has been found for that purpose, who while he is chuckling over the gains of his loathsome trade, even attempts to extenuate it, by alleging that the work of common copulation has resulted from the broad askings of jealous tenacity. In plainer terms, Mr. REYNOLDS is shameless enough to assure us that poetry from the pages of SHAKSPEARE can be advantageously amalgamated with his own balderdash, just as if the pure streams of a rolling river could be improved by their stagnant trans-

mission to the mantled waters of a clayey canal. The following scene will at once exhibit the principle upon which this alteration is founded, and set the editor's claims to such a trust as this revisal in their proper light:

SCENE II.

The House and Garden of ANTIPHOLIS.

Enter LUCIANA.

LUCI. Why does Antipholis so long delay,
And give his wife new cause for jealousy?
In vain I still *preach patience*, for *she says*,
That should I live to see these griefs my own,
My boasted reasoning would be thrown aside.
Well, *I will marry one day, but to try;*
Yet all things must combine to tempt me to it.
First the season: not when drear winter chills,
But when, as good old calendars assert,
Wedlock's apt season, merry spring-time comes!

Now, gentle reader, for the credit of our "immortal bard," not a vestige of this nonsense can be traced to his volumes; the pithy sentences that compose this exordium to a ballad from "As You Like It," are the undisputed results of Mr. REYNOLDS's—what shall we call it?—imagination; and from this delectable specimen of his felicity in stringing common-places, we dare avouch that thou would'st give him a seat in thy nursery, to *threadle* glass beads for the little children that run about it. He has long been engaged in a course of preparatory exercises for that office, having duly administered for these thirty years past to the puerile notions of Mr. HENRY HARRIS, and being in prospective want of a similar service, we recommend him to thy serious consideration.

Against every publication of this unnecessary nature our protest is again recorded. It can offer no plea for intruding upon the pockets and the patience of its readers, beyond the narrow fact of theatrical success, and such a plea is too often the very last that candour should prefer, or that criticism can receive. In the plenitude of literary ignorance, Mr. REYNOLDS has attributed MARLOE's pretty invocation of "Come live with me, and be my love," to his scoriated author, and even the doubtful apostrophe of "Take, oh! take those lips away," is assigned without the slightest explanation, though claimed by FLETCHER, in his tragedy of "Rollo." We are too sick of this subject to pursue it any farther, and shall therefore relinquish Mr. REYNOLDS to the scorn of those who may chuse to linger and laugh over the progress of his exquisite revisal.

R. S.

MR. WILKIN's NEW PICTURE

OF THE

Battle of Hastings.

Description of the Picture of the Battle of Hastings, Painted by FRANCIS WILLIAM WILKIN, *for Sir* GODFREY WEBSTER, *Bart. M. P. to be placed in his great Hall, in Battel Abbey. The Picture is on a scale of* 31 *ft.* 6 *inc. by* 17 *ft.* 6 *inc.* 8*vo. pp.* 15. *Price* 6*d.*—HANDY.

THE picture now exhibiting in the Great Room, Spring-garden, is one of the most splendid and impressive works of the kind we ever witnessed. It is a first attempt of the artist in historical painting, and it may be said of him, as was said of a celebrated French writer, his *Coup-d'essai* has proved a *Coup-de-maitre*. The picture is destined to be placed upon the very spot where the great event it so finely embodies, occurred; and it is only to be regretted that every site of great incidents in a country so rich in historical recollections, is not embellished by a pencil equally worthy to record them.

The crisis of the Battle is the moment selected for representation. The painter has allowed himself the privilege of the historical dramatist, and not precisely adhering to the trammels of the Chronicles, he has grouped circumstances which probably occurred on different days, or different spots of the field, in order to combine in one view all that could illustrate, or give interest to, the great consummation of the Conqueror's hopes. This license may, and perhaps will, provoke hypercriticism; still, there can be no comparison in any ingenuous, reflecting mind, between the artist who merely places on canvas a Chinese fac-simile of what is set before him, and the man, whose whole soul being filled with his subject, disregards irrelevant trifles, sees illustrious heroes and contending hosts of other ages spring up from the grave, and, "himself a war," not only transfers to canvas the action of the moment, but its secret springs and consequences, and all its inspiration.

WILLIAM the Conqueror forms the centre of the picture. On the rush to a charge, he checks his warlike steed, and the sword flies from his hand unconsciously; for he sees HAROLD, bleeding before him, and a kneeling warrior lifting to his view the crown of England. Bishop ODO plants his eyes upon the Conqueror,

and Tostain the Fair elevates, in triumph, the consecrated banner to which he ascribes the victory. Bodies of the slain, broken banners, and stern warriors, "overcome but not subdued," fill the fore-ground; still, the battle rages in the distance, troops of horse are seen galloping to the encounter,—while a Norman trumpeter, on a dark chesnut charger, blows the slughorne of victory, summoning the chiefs to hail the glory of their leader.

There is one point for which Mr. Wilkin deserves peculiar praise, and which we select for remark, because it has not yet been named, except for the purpose of censuring him. We allude to what the "Times" calls, in condemning it, "the human-like" expression in the eyes of the horses. Those who have been in battle are perfectly aware that the heroism of the horse speaks in his eye with a wild fierceness almost beyond the power of human expression; and the Elgin marbles, which are considered as some of the purest and most perfect models, display every variety of the most vigorous intelligence in the face and movement of the horse. The same critic charges the painter with ignorance of anatomy,—a charge which we should imagine he could easily disprove to an anatomist;—and still further fault is found by the critic of whom we have spoken, with "the short neck, small legs, &c." of Harold. Now it is very easy to imagine that a body quite inert, of great weight, wholly sustained by the arms of others, must necessarily have the shoulders forced up, and the head sunken down upon the breast; and this would make any neck appear short without being so in reality, while it is, at the same time, admirably expressive and natural. That the legs are neither short nor small, is equally evident, for the following reasons: The plane on which the figure of Harold is described, traversing perspectively the plane on which the conqueror is advancing, in addition to the relaxed undulating line running through Harold's figure, induces considerable fore-shortening in his legs, which is evidently the case from the sole of the foot being visible, which could not be seen, were the leg presented geometrically to the eye:—and as to the thickness of the legs, to prove the truth of their proportions it is not necessary to resort to any other vindicator than a pair of compasses.

In all the praises of the "Times," and the other critics, we most heartily concur; and add a tribute which may come with peculiar emphasis and propriety from a work principally devoted to theatrical subjects. We allude to the rigid correctness of the scenery

and costume. In the new romance of "Ivanhoe," as dramatized at the Surrey Theatre by Mr. THOMAS DIBDIN, the dresses, arms, and banners of Mr. WILKIN'S picture have been consulted; and if our managers could always find authorities equally true, and picturesque, and would adopt them, a new and a valuable quality would be added to the few good ones which now belong to the stage.

A Short Reign and a Merry One. A Petite Comedy, in two acts, (taken from the French) By JOHN POOLE, *Esq.* 8vo. *pp.* 49. *Price* 2*s.*—MILLER.

WE have already professed our approbation of this lively little piece, and find no reason, on perusal, to retract an iota of our recorded sentiments. To the praise of Mr. POOLE it may mentioned, that his style is no longer defaced by endless *pun*, but manifests a very pleasing combination of ease, elegance, and humour. Upon this improvement we most sincerely congratulate him, and accept it as an earnest of his future adherence to the just dictates of legitimate literature.

The Theatrical House that Jack Built. With thirteen Cuts. 8vo. *pp.* 27, *Price* 1*s.*—GROVE.

This catch-penny publication has been suggested by a popular tract of political texture, which seems to have met with considerable success, from the whimsicality, we suppose, of its outrageous embellishments. To a theatrical parody of that work, conducted with skill and replete with satire, we should have ranked among the last to prefer any serious objection; but when in lieu of ridiculing the public errors of a splendid establishment, we see its most sacred recesses invaded for personal exposure, it behoves us, with whatever contempt we may view its inveterate errors, to protest against the scandalous scurrility of such a despicable libeller.

We shall not disfigure our pages with the slightest analysis of this miserable publication, which reflects in the most senseless manner upon individuals of undoubted talent, and acknowledged probity. Ignorance is sometimes an excuse for brutality, and if the chief objects of this paltry libel had not been soothed by that consideration, more than half a dozen horsewhips, we sincerely believe, would have long since been employed in refuting it.

The London Magazine, and Monthly Critical and Dramatic Review. No. 1, *for January*, 1820. 8*vo. pp.* 112. *Price* 2*s.* 6*d.*—GOLD *and* NORTHHOUSE.

UPON the general merits of this magazine we have neither time nor inclination to expatiate. More than an ordinary portion of its pages, however, is devoted to theatrical subjects, and with that feature of the work we may, perhaps, be permitted to interfere.

The gentleman engaged for this department of the "London Magazine," is avowedly a seceder from the superintendence of the work in which we are at present employed; and with many peculiar accomplishments for a brilliant discharge of his dramatic duties, we believe him to possess that cordiality of feeling, which though it may afford no infallible defence against unconscious error, will always prevent the possibility of wilful perversion. His opening essay comprises a broad view of the British Drama, and without dissenting from its general propositions, there are certain points of inference upon which a few cursory remarks may be amicably hazarded.

In the tribute to SHAKSPEARE, who is eloquently eulogized as the "apostle of nature and the prophet of all that was to come," we most implicitly concur, but cannot, in the warmth of peculiar enthusiasm, look coldly upon the cotemporaneous lustre by which his brilliance was surrounded. That JONSON, FLETCHER, and MASSINGER, were mere writers for the century in which they lived, is disproved by their equality, in many valuable attributes, to the great idol of our dramatic adoration; for touches of character, richness of conception, and harmony of language, these vivid luminiaries of the drama have never been excelled; and though SHAKSPEARE's superiority is admitted by every candid observer, that superiority will not be enhanced by vague, wanton, and unfounded depreciation of his potent competitors.

Such a classification as that of OTWAY, LEE, SOUTHERN, ROWE, LILLO, SHEIL, BUCKE, and MATURIN, under the head of "modern writers in tragedy," is among the most preposterous and objectionable arrangements it has ever been our duty to denounce. We do not allude so much to the discrepancy of talent exhibited by these individual dramatists, as the very great intervals of time that have elapsed between the dates of their various productions. The reviewer has assured us that by "modern" he means *recent*,* and

* See Page 86.

how far the first five names upon his list are conformable to that assurance, we do not feel ourselves tasked to explain. Otway, Lee, and Southern, at least, were the genuine coadjutors of Dryden; and we cannot help thinking that their *manes* are more cruelly insulted by this personal association, than its concomitant invective.

We are almost inclined to stipulate, with undiminished warmth, for Mr. Maturin's immediate release from the odium to which, in herding him with such a miserable impostor as Bucke, he has been so unwarrantably subjected. As a poet of pure, though eccentric inspiration, we deem this Hibernian bard deserving of high critical honours; and though his productions are too buoyant for the trammels of histrionic vulgarity, they have not failed, as the reviewer admits, "from any striking defects in the plays themselves." That the pie-bald efforts of Kean have preserved either of Mr. Maturin's tragedies from obscurity is easily disproved,—for, if so, how came the last piece from his pen, in which Mr. Kean sustained the hero, to want its accustomed success? An actor may enrich, but cannot fabricate, as every recorded instance of failure will evince; he may bear the world upon his brawny shoulders, but that world must be framed by abler hands, and adjusted with consummate skill to his tottering strength, or he will sink, like Æsop's fellow-slave, beneath the pressure of his ponderous burthen.

Upon the glaring immorality of the Theatres some judicious, though temperate suggestions are offered, which we cannot perhaps more appropriately develope, than in the author's own words:

> The managers seem now as if idolaters of antiquity, and in the blindness of their worship forget the objects of their devotion: they only seem to regard the moderns in one particular—in preferring young actresses for the scene, and young unfortunates for the saloon. And by the way, we beg leave to ask, what are the Society for the Suppression of Vice doing, to permit that abandonment which nightly goes forward at the Theatres? They are at great pains to prevent a poor tradesman from purchasing his little comforts on the Sabbath day, and the poor dealer from deriving a little profit by his industry. The guardians of the streets will not allow the flag way to be intruded on by an apple-seller, whilst they allow half the breadth of a street to be occupied for months to repair the mansion of some noble. And so it is exactly with the society of which we have just spoken: they have very properly prosecuted persons for selling obscene pictures, but with peculiar generosity allow the *living image* to make the best market of her charms, and in the least underhand manner. There seems to be no smuggling in the business, for every thing is open and above board: but we

cannot reconcile the inconsistency of such conduct. Perhaps, one half the charm of a Theatre is the facility that it affords to profligacy of the description we allude to; and we know that a certain individual not far from Covent-garden Theatre never refuses a free admission to a *belle blonde*, or any *superior* "maid who loves the moon."

The following paragraph is also worthy of quotation, as it sets the new management of Drury-lane in a light to which, from the venality of the public press, it has hitherto been unaccustomed;

Mr. ELLISTON has been known to the London public as a performer, something more than a dozen years; and in a peculiar walk of comedy, was certainly without his equal (his tragedy having been at all times execrable,) till——— his speculative spirit induced him to take the Surrey Theatre; and there, whether actuated by the wish of getting money or losing his fame, he became a downright buffoon. Poor LAWLER *(de mortuis nil nisi bonum)* was his literary protegée used to write melo-dramas for him, and *inter alia*, versified "Macbeth," expressly for Mr. ELLISTON to perform the character. Yes, to Mr. ELLISTON's eternal disgrace be it spoken, he was a party to this double outrage. Mr. LAWLER broke SHAKSPEARE upon the wheel by versifying him, and Mr. ELLISTON gave him the *coup de grace* by performing his *Macbeth*. Versatility, if we remember right, was Mr. ELLISTON's grand characteristic in Surrey; he frequently used to perform *Captain Macheath*, and we have some recollection of his performing *Bombastes Furioso!* Mr. ELLISTON continued to act and to manage at the Surrey Theatre, as long as *it was convenient*. From this period we may date Mr. ELLISTON's descent from the eminence which he had previously attained; for it is pretty generally admitted amongst critics, that since his Surrey Theatre exploits, he has no longer been the actor he previously was. He there lost all that polish of manners, that insinuation and refinement, which had before rendered him the most perfect representative of the finished gentleman that our stage boasted. The public opinion on this point was pretty fully evinced during his short engagement of twelve nights at Drury-lane Theatre, a season or two ago; on which nights, as we have heard from very good authority, the receipts of the Theatre fell fifteen pounds a night below the average of the season up to that time; though, on the first application to him to perform, he demanded five hundred pounds and a free benefit for the twelve nights. But the Surrey Theatre is only one among the numerous specimens we have had of Mr. ELLISTON's talents for management. He has been proprietor of the Birmingham Theatre. Birmingham is notoriously one of the most play-going towns in the kingdom: he managed here till he made the Theatre a desart, and a source of nightly loss to himself, till he was compelled by prudence to dispose of the concern, which has ever since flourished as before. Of his management of the Leamington Theatre, in which town he exercised the triple capacity of bookseller-stationer, assembly-room keeper,* and manager, we shall say nothing, because we are not in possession of authentic information on the subject; and we now come to the period when

* This is a mistake. Mr. ELLISTON *applied* for the Assembly-rooms, but could not obtain them.

he swayed the destiny of the Olympic Theatre. For several seasons, this Theatre, under Mr. ELLISTON 's management, was one of the least worthy of notice in London; performers, who were the offscourings of country barns, and pieces which were beneath contempt, (diversified by exhibitions of rope-dancers and dancing-dogs,) kept it very low in the estimation of the public, and we should apprehend, rendered it far from profitable to himself. Last season, he re-decorated the Theatre, condescended to perform himself, engaged Mrs. EDWIN, and Mr. WRENCH, brought out several pieces which had claims to popularity, and by a system of management infinitely more creditable to himself than any he had previously adopted, brought the concern into public favour, and reaped the harvest of his exertions. The circumstances we have here detailed evince an active and enterprizing mind, but what pledge they hold out of his competency to govern the mighty machine over which he now presides, every one must infer for himself. We have thought it fair in considering his claims to public support, in contradistinction to those of a committee, to revert to these occurrences.

We congratulate the readers of this miscellany upon the sense and spirit with which its theatrical strictures are about to be conducted, and are perhaps not unselfishly alive to the value of so discerning and independent a coadjutor in the great work of managerial reform. Our own opposition to the ignorance and brutality by which the metropolitan drama is degraded, has aroused the fiercest anger of its hireling advocates, upon whose venom, whenever he comes in turn to be assailed, we trust the writer of this exposé will bend an eye of steady contempt, and inflexible defiance.

The London Magazine, No. 1, *for January*, 1820. *8vo. pp.* 120. *Price* 2*s.* 6*d. Second Edition.*—BALDWIN, CRADOCK, *and* JOY.

UNDER the head of "General Reporter," a series of theatrical strictures has been commenced in this miscellany, upon which it is our peculiar duty to offer such remarks as the nature of that article may appear to demand. With the precise mode of communicating his sentiments adopted by the present writer, we have no wish to interfere; but our own affection for unfrittered truth impels us to observe, that it might safely be distinguished by more steadiness of research, and sobriety of manner.

The following exordium is not transcribed for the sake of registering our decided dissent from its principal positions; though liable, in many points, to angry reproof, and unsparing exposure. It offers a fair specimen of the writer's opinions, and, in that light, is entitled to the fullest quotation our limits will permit:

In commencing our account of the drama for the year 1820, and turning our

eye back, as far as our personal recollection reaches, towards the conclusion of the last century, *we do not think we should be justified* by the customary topics of comparison or privileges of criticism, *in making a general complaint of the degeneracy of the stage.** Within our remembrance, at least, it has not fallen off to any alarming degree, either in the written or the acted performances. It has changed its style considerably in both these respects, but it does not follow that it has altogether deteriorated: it has shifted its ground, but has found its level. With respect to the pieces brought out, we have got striking melo-dramas for dull tragedies; and short farces are better than long ones of five acts. The *semper varium et mutabile* of the poet, may be transferred to the stage, "the inconstant stage," without losing the original felicity of the application:—It has its necessary ebbs and flows, from its subjection to the influence of popular feeling, and the frailty of the materials of which it is composed, its own fleeting and shadowy essence, and cannot be expected to remain for any great length of time stationary at the same point, either of perfection or debasement. Acting, in particular, which is the chief organ by which it addresses itself to the mind;—the eye, tongue, hand by which it dazzles, charms, and seizes on the public attention—is an art that seems to contain in itself the seeds of perpetual renovation and decay, following in this respect the order of nature rather than the analogy of the productions of human intellect:—for whereas in the other arts of painting and poetry, the standard works of genius being permanent and accumulating, for awhile provoke emulation, but, in the end, overlay future efforts, and transmit only their defects to those that come after; the exertions of the greatest actor die with him, leaving to his successors only the admiration of his name, and the aspiration after imaginary excellence; so that in effect "no one generation of actors binds another;" the art is always setting out afresh on the stock of genius and nature, and the success depends (generally speaking) on accident, opportunity, and encouragement. The harvest of excellence (whatever it may be) is removed from the ground, every twenty or thirty years, by death's sickle; and there is room left for another to sprout up and tower to an equal height, and spread into equal luxuriance—to "dally with the wind, and court the sun"—according to the health and vigour of the stem, and the favourableness of the season.

To what retrospective era the "remembrance" of this critic can be carried is a point we are unable to explain, and yet the argument turns so entirely upon a solution of that puzzle, that Mr. * * * is bound to help us through the labyrinth of personal conjecture. Anonymous writers have no authority to travel in this track;

* To show how strangely doctors differ, we need only make a reference to the rival "London Magazine," which developes a contrary opinion in the following words:

"*In regarding the Theatre, we cannot avoid noticing the great decline of genius in the pieces performed, and of talent in their several performers. We allude to the productions of modern poets, and the delineations of character as given us by modern performers.*" p. 86.

their ages and pursuits are improper objects for literary reference, and it surely exhibits either want of candour or want of skill, to rest the brunt of a bold disquisition upon attributes beyond the reach of persevering inquiry, or polite exposure.

In considering the performances of a past age, we should duly advert to the feelings with which those performances were received. "Tragedies," of a *dull* texture to the present taste, were certainly fraught with amusement in the eyes of local observation, and to assert that our "striking melo-drames" form, abstractedly, an advantageous change, is a dogma to which we cannot easily subscribe. How far "short farces are better than long ones of five acts," is also a novel hypothesis that time should be granted to discuss. If farces or any other *media* of senseless entertainment, are valuable in proportion to their exhilarating qualities, *length* of influence, we humbly conceive, makes rather *for* than *against* their superior pretensions. "She Stoops to Conquer," for intance, is one of the *five-act* farces against which our critic protests, and yet, who would relinquish it, on account of inherent "length," for the shortest effusion of humour with which the stage is at present supplied? To say, then, that *in shifting its ground*, it "has found its level," can hardly mean that our modern dramas have retrieved the flights of former "perfection," or reached the depths of antient "debasement;" such a meaning would be even too absurd for the licensed eccentricity of Mr. Hazlitt, and therefore, we most respectfully presume, means—nothing at all.

Acting, we will admit, is indeed, the "chief organ" by which the drama appeals to public *attention*; but to own that it meanders to the *mind* through a channel of such noxious impurity, exceeds the very easiness of our ignorance, and the facility of our faith. Acting is just such an altar for the worship of human intellect, as preaching is an instrument for the furtherance of human piety; and the *mind* derives about as much delight from the cold-blooded declamation of puppet-show actors, as the soul obtains improvement from the drowsy lectures of great overgrown dignitaries, with rubicund noses and gouty ancles, or broad bloated faces, dragging along their ponderous bellies, as emblems of sloth, luxury, and indigestion.

Why "the exertions of the greatest actor die with him leaving to his successors only the admiration of his name, and the aspiration after imaginary excellence," is a problem that we can only solve

by an assurance of their utter unworthiness for elaborate preservation. Acting, embodied by literature, is but a paltry straw incrusted with transparent amber, and whatever importance may be attached by fashion to the toy of its caprice, no existence beyond the date of transitory honour can be achieved by the proudest consequence, or most indefatigable cunning. What remains of BURBADGE, with whom an intimacy was sought by every gallant of his time,—of MOHUN or HART, who conversed with their royal master,—of BETTERTON beloved by POPE, of GARRICK, beyond his opulence,—and of KEMBLE, but his erudition? If any of these have claims upon the homage of posterity, those claims are built upon a firmer basis than mere professional cleverness; and this is the case, it must be owned, with some individuals, whom nature seems to have intended for a much better purpose.*

We shall probably return to this article, in estimating the claims of its successor, and till then may perhaps be permitted to remark, that though invested with occasional brilliance of censure and praise, it wants unpretending simplicity of language and opinion.

OXBERRY'S *New English Drama, No.* 39. *Coriolanus, a Tragedy, by* WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE. 12*mo pp.* 62. *Price* 1*s.*—SIMPKIN *and* MARSHALL.

THE remarks upon this series of plays are generally distinguished by a vein of firm and faithful thinking, though sometimes deficient in those minor points of criticism or biography which the reader feels entitled to receive. We quote the following paragraph more as a fair specimen of the merit we have ascribed, than to usher in our dissent from one or two of its opinions:

SHAKSPEARE was on no occasion the poet of manners; his characters are citizens of the world, and never bear the stamp of any age or any country. He knew and laid open the human heart in its strength, and in its weakness, paying very little attention to what may not improperly be termed the poetical costume of character. The patrician pride of *Coriolanus*, the vacillating thoughtlessness of the mob, the crafty democratic spirit of the tribunes, all these are qualities as general as the form of man himself; to many readers this may appear a defect, but it is precisely from this, whether defect or virtue, that the language of

* We see the name, for example, of one gentleman connected with the stage, as a subscriber to VALPY'S "Classics," and we honour him more for one such evidence of literary feeling than a hundred personations, however admirable, of *Coriolanus* or *Othello*.

SHAKSPEARE can never grow antiquated till the world has lost its passions and its thinkings, its virtues and its vices. He speaks the general language of mankind, and therefore must be understood by all until that language ceases to be spoken.

The first sentence of this encomium is extremely paradoxical. SHAKSPEARE "speaks the general language of mankind," and yet is "on *no occasion* the poet of manners;" nor, though "his characters are citizens of the world," do they ever "bear the stamp of any age or country." Independent of this contradictory homage, it strikes us that to divest an author of every claim upon applause for rigidly pourtraying the habits of that people he has undertaken to depict, can tend but little to enhance his labour, or corroborate his praise. The qualities embodied in this particular drama,—whether "patrician pride," or "vacillating thoughtlessness,"—have been generalized by Nature herself, and it is as idle to compliment the poet upon their existence, as to eulogize him for the creation of those characters he has so diversly represented.

Upon the subsequent passage we shall also beg leave to make a few hasty reflections:

The tragedy of "Coriolanus" is full of bustle, but the plots of SHAKSPEARE were formed upon a plan and for a purpose, not very generally understood; and never practised on the modern stage. The object of them is, for the most part, to exhibit his characters in every possible point of view; and not to surprise by their wonders, or delight by their variety. Sometimes the plot may be said to grow out of the peculiar nature of the characters, and it is this very circumstance that forms one of the most prominent of SHAKSPEARE'S merits.

So far from acceding to SHAKSPEARE'S imputed object in the formation of his plots, a mere reference to the mode in which this tragedy was prepared, will fully refute the correctness of Mr. OXBERRY'S notion. It is avowedly taken from Sir THOMAS NORTH'S translation of "Plutarch," in many essential particulars, and with whatever fortuitous flashes of sublimity the genius of SHAKSPEARE may have irradiated his subject,—in its fable or its characters,—we hazard little in asserting our belief that no direct intention was harboured by the author, of exhibiting his muse in any moral light, but that which chance might effectuate, or caprice could ascribe.

Several strong pictures of the *dramatis personæ* are drawn by our editor's hand, with unimpeachable fidelity, among which the tribunes and the people are delineated with peculiar power. Political deduction is perhaps misapplied to the present subject, though a sound constitutional love of law and order is entitled to respect upon the

most inapposite occasions. This number is embellished with a very striking likeness of Mr. KEAN, so striking, indeed, as to eclipse the preceding resemblances of the same eminent performer, with which Mr. OXBERRY's publication has been exclusively adorned. The text is compounded, as heretofore, from the pages of SHAKSPEARE and THOMSON, and when the appetite for worthless innovation has passed away, it is a text to which every enthusiastic actor of *Coriolanus* must eventually return.

A Sicilian Story, with Diego de Montilla, and other poems, by BARRY CORNWALL. *Foolscap 8vo. pp.* 177. *Price 7s.*—C. *and* J. OLLIER.

OUR business, at least principally if not altogether, with this publication, is confined to one of its component parts,—a dramatic sketch called the "Falcon," the substance of which is thus described, in an extract, by the author:

Frederigo, of the Alberighi family, loved a gentlewoman and was not requited with like love again. But by bountiful expenses, and over liberal invitations, he wasted all his lands and goods, having nothing left him but a hawk or faulcon. His unkind mistress happeneth to come to visit him, and he not having any other food for her dinner, made a dainty dish of his faulcon for her to feed on. Being conquered by this exceeding kind courtesie, she changed her former hatred towards him, accepting him as her husband in marriage, and made him a man of wealthy possessions.—"*Boccacio*," *old translation; fifth day, novel* 9.

Such are the materials of two scenes embodied by Mr. CORNWALL upon this barren subject, in a vein of pathetic simplicity to which we cannot help subscribing with almost unqualified admiration. This romantic cast of fable, we admit, demands no peculiar quickness of incident, or deep diversity of character; it claims, however, from those very exemptions, a force and fluency of language, which the most poetical imagination may be embarrassed to supply, and to the honours of that imagination we think the muse of Mr. CORNWALL is supremely entitled.

Frederigo is discovered, at the opening of this sketch, in a state of cheerless despondency, which disperses, in part, before the influence of sober reflection:

Outside of a Cottage—Sunset.

FREDERIGO *alone.*

O, poverty! And have I learnt at last
Thy bitter lesson? Thou forbidding thing
That ast such sway upon this goodly earth,

Stern foe to comfort, sleep's disquieter,
What have I done that thou should'st press me thus?
Let me not say how I did bear me in
Prosperity; much of the good we do
Lies in its secret—But away with this,
For here are skiey themes to dwell upon.
Now do I feel my spirit hath not quite
Sunk with my fortunes.—'Tis the set of Sun.
How like a hero who hath run his course
In glory doth he die! His parting smile
Hath somewhat holy in it, and doth stir
Regret, but soft and unallied to pain,
To see him quietly sink and sink away,
Until on yonder western mountain's top
Lingering, he rests at last, and leaves a look
More beautiful than e'er he shed before:
A parting present, felt by all that lov'd
And flourish'd in his warm creative smile.
Nor unattended does he quit the world,
For there's a stillness in this golden hour
Observable by all; the birds that trill'd
And shook their ruffled plumes for joy to see
His coming in the morning, sing no more:
Or if a solitary note be heard,
Or the deep lowing of the distant beast,
'Tis but to mark the silence. Like to this,
In a great city the cathedral clock,
Lifting its iron tongue, doth seem to stay
Time for a moment, while it calls aloud
To student's or to sick man's watchful ear,
"Now goes the midnight." Then, I love to walk,
And, heark'ning to that church memorial, deem
That sometimes it may sound a different tale,
And upwards to the stars and mighty moon
Send hollow tidings from this dreaming world,
Proclaiming all below as calm as they.
The sun-light changes, and the tints are now
Darkened to purple. Ha! a step: who's there?
A Lady—O Giana!

The *Giana* thus apostrophized is the object of his baffled affection, who comes, attended by her maid, to prove the vigour of his broken hospitality. While the repast is preparing, she retires to *Frederigo's* orchard, and he, in utter want of more suitable provision, kills the "Falcon," by whom his daily meals were supplied, to furnish food for his mistress's table. His soliloquy over the slain bird is deserving of quotation:

Mars! my brave bird, and have I killed thee, then,
Who was the truest servant—fed me, loved,
When all the world had left me?—Never more
Shall thou and I in mimic battle play,
Nor thou pretend to die, (to die, alas!)
And with thy quaint and frolic tricks delight
Thy master in his solitude. No more,
No more, old Mars! (thou wast the god of birds)
Shalt thou rise fiercely on thy plumed wing,
And hunt the air for plunder: thou couldst ride,
None better, on the fierce and mountain winds
When birds of lesser courage droop'd. I've seen
Thee scare the wandering eagle on his way,
(For all the wild tribes of these circling woods
Knew thee and shunn'd thy beak) and thro' the air
Float like a hovering tempest fear'd by all.
Have I not known thee bring the wild swan down
For me, thy cruel master: aye, and stop
The screaming vulture in the middle air,
And mar his scarlet plumage—all for me,
Who kill'd thee—*murdered* thee, poor bird, for thou
Wast worthy of humanity, and I
Feel with these shaking hands, as I had done
A crime against my race.

The second scene occurs upon the finishing of this eventful meal, and acquaints us with a more cogent motive for *Giana's* visit than had hitherto been detailed. Her child, an only and a fair one, from the impulse of a sick or wayward fancy, languishes for the "Falcon" that *Frederigo* had just destroyed; she solicits it with much modest importunity, and learns from her lover, though reluctant in rendering the truth, that it had been appropriated to the purpose already described. Struck with the generosity of such a feeling, she avows its impression upon "her inmost heart," and ultimately offers him the hand that had long been so cruelly denied. Exhilarated to a pitch of delirium, *Frederigo* pours out the swollen stream of his sensations, in the following luxuriant manner:

FRED. What can I say?
GIA. Nothing. I read your heart.
FRED. It bursts, my love; but 'tis with joy, with joy.
Giana! *my* Giana! we will have
Nothing but halcyon days: O, we will live
As happily as the bees that hive their sweets,
And gaily as the summer fly, but wiser:
I'll be thy servant ever: yet not so,

O, my own love, divinest, best, I'll be
Thy sun of life, faithful through every season,
And thou shalt be my flower perennial,
My bud of beauty, my imperial rose,
My passion flower, and I will wear thee on
My heart, and thou shalt never, never fade.
I'll love thee mightily, my queen, and in
The sultry hours I'll sing thee to thy rest
With music sweeter than the wild bird's song:
And I will swear thine eyes are like the stars,
(They are, they are, but softer) and thy shape
Fine as the vaunted nymphs' who, poets feign'd,
Dwelt long ago in woods of Arcady.
My gentle deity! I'll crown thee with
The whitest lilies and then bow me down
Love's own idolater, and worship thee.
And thou *wilt* then be mine? My love, my love!
How fondly will we pass our lives together;
And wander, heart-link'd, thro' the busy world
Like birds in eastern story.

GIA. O, you rave.

FRED. I'll be a miser of thee; watch thee ever:
At morn, at noon, at eve, and all the night.
We will have clocks that with their silver chime
Shall measure out the moments: and I'll mark
The time and keep love's pleasant calendar:
To-day I'll note a smile: to-morrow how
Your bright eyes spoke—how saucily, and then
Record a kiss pluck'd from your currant lip,
And say how long 'twas taking: then thy voice,
As rich as stringed harp swept by the winds
In autumn, gentle as the touch that falls
On serenader's moon-lit instrument—
Nothing shall pass unheeded. Thou shalt be
My household goddess—nay smile not, nor shake
Backwards thy clustering curls, incredulous:
I swear it shall be so: it shall, my love.

GIA. Why, now thou'rt mad indeed: mad.

FRED. O, not so.
There was once a statuary who lov'd
And worshipped the white marble that he shaped;
Till, as the story goes, the Cyprus' queen,
Or some such fine kind-hearted deity,
Touch'd the pale stone with life, and it became,
At last, Pygmalion's bride: but thee—on whom
Nature had lavish'd all her wealth before,
Now Love has touch'd with beauty: doubly fit

For human worship thou, thou—let me pause,
My breath is gone.
GIA. With talking.
FRED. With delight.
But I may worship thee in silence, still.
GIA. The evening's dark; Now I must go: farewell until
To-morrow.
FRED. O, not yet, not yet.
Behold! the moon is up, the bright-eye'd moon,
And seems to shed her soft delicious light
On lovers reunited. Why, she smiles,
And bids you tarry: will you disobey
The lady of the sky? beware.
GIA. Farewell.
Nay, nay, I must go.
FRED. We will go together.
GIA. It must not be to-night: my servants wait my coming
At the fisher's cottage.
FRED. Yet,
A few more words, and then I'll part with thee,
For one long night: to-morrow bid me come.
(Thou hast already with thine eyes) and bring
My load of love and lay it at thy feet.
—O, ever while those floating orbs look bright
Shalt thou to me be a sweet guiding light.
Once, the Chaldean from his topmost tower
Did watch the stars, and then assert their power
Throughout the world! so, dear Giana, I
Will vindicate my own idolatry.
And in the beauty and the spell that lies
In the dark azure of thy love-lit eyes;
In the clear veins that wind thy neck beside,
'Till in the white depths of thy breast they hide,
And in thy polish'd forehead, and thy hair
Heap'd in thick tresses on thy shoulders fair;
In thy calm dignity; thy modest sense;
In thy most soft and winning eloquence;
In woman's gentleness and love (now bent
On me, so poor) shall lie my argument.

Such are the leading features of this dramatic specimen, in which Mr. CORNWALL has exhibited the richest qualities of a pregnant imagination and a guarded taste, replete with rare evidence of his fitness for any task of poetic magnitude, attainable to conceptive truth and verbal power. We regret that our limits will not permit the slightest reference to his accompanying poems, which present many points for zealous and impartial eulogium. We are

aware that no fiat from criticism can enhance the welcome of abilities such as Mr. Cornwall possesses, yet still it is pleasant to be among the foremost of those by whom his value is felt, and his pretensions are attested.

Original and Select Poetry.

NEW POEM BY LORD GRIZZLE.

To the Editor of the Theatrical Inquisitor.

SIR,—I happened, in the course of my peregrinations, to find myself in Venice, lately, that beautiful Sadler's-Wells of a city, where, if you want an airing, you must take it like a duck, upon the water;—and near a famous mansion, in Saint Samuel, I picked up the enclosed papers, which, not perfectly understanding their drift, I send for your inspection, and shall be much obliged if you will tell me whether it is not likely I might make some money by publishing them in quarto, on my own account.

I am, sir, yours, &c.

Naples, January 1, 1820. DAVID'S SON.

DON FLUMMERY.

A Poem.

BY

LORD GRIZZLE.

CANTO 1.

I.

Once on a time, a little island stood
Washed on all sides by the wild ocean-waves;
This little isle's inhabitants were good,
Though very easily deceived by knaves;
And even here dwelt one of interest's slaves,
To whom scarce any scheme could come awry,
That yields resources greater than it craves;
And, from an early trick of arrant mummery,
The little island's sons called him DON FLUMMERY.

Or I'll speedily teach you to rue it;
I'll summon the might
Of my own true knight,
And he'll do me right,
On this very night,
If I rouse him—get out! or I'll

DUET.

FLUMMERY, *somewhat annoyed.*

Your knight may be damned!
Think not I'll be crammed
With any such Billinsgate stuff.

DAMSEL, *a little out of temper.*

The public you've rammed,
With promises shammed—

FLUMMERY, *impatient.*

Don't scold, ma'am, I scorn your rebuff;
And further, proud fair,
If to bluster you dare,
I'll make you pay *me* the amount!

DAMSEL, *with the disdain of conscious power.*

Come, come, sir, beware!
Take very good care,
Or I'll settle, and soon, *your* account.

VIII.

Now came the mighty moment:—but the tale
Of deeds ensuing mayn't be mentioned now;
The growls of dudgeon or of drink prevail,
And terror darkens on the listener's brow:
Yet what befel the muse cannot avow,
For the muse knows not; though of this gallant,—O,
Great the resentment, furious was the row.
Farewell! I'm forced to quit thee, reader! and to
Make, with this snail-paced line, an

END

OF

THE FIRST CANTO.

ILLUSTRATIONS

OF

THE FIRST CANTO OF LORD GRIZZLE'S

DON FLUMMERY.

BY

J. H. COBHOUSE, ESQ.

"Cob was Nob's wife."—*Mynstrelsie o' the Nurserie; Vol.* XXIII.

DEDICATION.

TO THE HONOURABLE MEMBER,

WHOSE MOTION ABRIDGED MY LOCOMOTION.

SIR—HOMER was forced to wander from town to town, without a home; but I, in the very outset of my career, have been more fortunate; I have written myself into a snug residence, and can, at least, boast of having a roof over my head, which HOMER had not. To you, as my MECENAS, (for 'tis to your friendship I am indebted for the honour of my present abode) I dedicate this volume of "Illustrations," hoping that you will never find occasion to say, like *Dangle* in the "Critic"—"Egad, I think the interpreter is the harder to be understood of the two."

I am, Sir,

Yours as in duty *bound*,

Oldgate, January 1820 J. H. COBHOUSE.

VER. II.

That, with his hammer raised, an auctioneer,
And one of Parliament's most noisy ones.

This coalition seemed to me, at first, incongruous: for what should bring a statesman and an auctioneer together? Surely, no sympathy in their pursuits.—But Doctor BUZZARD, who knows every thing, let me into the secret. He says, the statesman was passing under the piazza of a great palace, and composing a speech upon the present state of the nation,—when the auctioneer's phrase of "*Going, Going, Gone!*"—struck upon his ear,—whereupon he rejoiced exceedingly, regarding it as an elegant summary in three words of all he would have said in a great many;—so, giving way to the generous impetuosity of his character, he dashed into the midst of the astonished assembly of speculators, and rushing up to G. R. (not GEORGE Rex) exclaimed "Sir, let us henceforth be inseparable; you are the Cæsar of modern eloquence, and the only man who has equalled the brevity and the expressiveness of the "*Veni, Vidi, Vici*" of antiquity.

VER. III.

And even HARRY *scampered from the field.*

There were *two* HARRYS at this famous fight; which does the Pot mean? *Two* HARRYS also "went over the bridge," as the saying is: a measure to which the liberality of mighty potentates has forced many a worthy fellow;—and surely dependants are not to be blamed, when monopolists can't pay.—The other side of the water, says the eloquent dealer in light, is the "*Asylum* of *neglected* talent."—He ought, like ZACHARIAH JACKSON, to call it the "*justifier* of *corrected* talent,"—since he has undertaken to "*rationalize* SHAKSPEARE" *by a vast reduction of matter*," through the medium of his Poet Laureat, whose pen, like an inverted opera-glass, makes *little* of the sublimest subjects; and, indeed, carries the power of "*vast reduction*" so far, that as to SHAKSPEARE—Oh! *he makes nothing of him!*

VER. IV.

Don FLUMMERY *two Sancho Panzas had.*

Upon this assertion antient chronicles differ, for some even go so far as to declare that he had four, and Doctor BUZZARD, who has written concerning those times, has been described as one of them. I don't know how that may be, but the DON certainly had a sort of SCARAMOUCH, or SANCHO PANZA, or JACK PUDDING, or some such officer about him, who is never named by the poet. Of this dignitary,—the best of the tribe in point of talent, (as many of his fragments inserted in the critical works of the recorders prove) I may have occasion to speak hereafter, always lamenting that genius should ever forget that independence of character to which it is entitled, especially in presence of the mushroom greatness of bank notes and fortuitous supremacy. I hope I may have cause to change my opinion of this person, concerning the present, and that some suspicions which are afloat with regard to the future, may never be verified. Surely the lustre of place cannot dazzle the bard!—Who was governor of Barataria?

His name was INNOCENCE, *a gay old lad.*

A passage in an antient poet, no less a personage than the renowned Rigdum Funidos, charges INNOCENCE with very unjustifiable encroachments, especially with regard to one PENLEYBUS:

"He took, as Rigdum Funidos doth say,
The characters of PENLEYBUS away."—

Rig. Fun. LIB. XXIX.

Another writer says that PENLEYBUS remonstrated with INNOCENCE and exclaimed,—"Sir, you've taken away my *character!*" to which INNOCENCE replied with a gentle smile—"Bless you, my dear friend, now it's very cruel in you to complain. You deal in characters, and can manufacture new ones faster than I can take away the old."—To which PENLEYBUS is said to have retorted,—"Make the most of my property while you are in power. The public will open their eyes and their mouths, too, and, as for the *characters*—

"You have them—but you will not keep them long."

He wore peculiar breeches.———

Let it be thoroughly understood that the *peculiarity* of these *breeches* arose, not from their cut, but their colour. I find the epithet so used in "Mr. LAURENCE TEMPLETON, his true Chronicle History of the Life and Death of the Knight of Ivanhoe." Thus: "He wore a highe square yellowe cappe of *peculiarre facyon*, assyned to his nacyon to dystynguyshe them from chrystyens."—LIB. 1; *cap.* 7; *fol.* LXXXIV.—Harbour Manuscripte.

VER. V.

Took to himself (he'd many taking ways)
For charity a reputation ample.

Don FLUMMERY once made a great fuss about something he did for the benefit of certain sufferers, whose miseries had been noticed by the neighbouring potentates with that kind of inobtrusive generosity of spirit which makes us better pleased with the world, because it shows that there is something to be found in it as an offset against mere puffing and charlatanism.

The DON would not let slip so favourable an opportunity of showing himself off, for he loved "that men should stage him with their eyes;" therefore, much to the annoyance of the million, he appeared before them on this occasion, while they were longing for his Head Janissary; but, as the man in the play says—"Policy, Mr. Speaker!" 'Tis believed that he intended to have commenced the Grand Fete of Charity with a Trio between himself and the two SANCHOS,—who were to have appeared together, and sung to the tune of—

Pity, kind gentlemen, friends of humanity,

for which the Stock Poet had written new words, commencing,

Lord may'r and aldermen, see my humanity!
Cash it costs little, but tickles my vanity.

However, one of the SANCHOS objected, because it would put him to the expense of a pair of black silk stockings, and the other had unfortunately fractured his "peculiar breeches." It is remarkable that the DON made more noise about his charity than any body else, and yet almost every body else, who undertook to help the sufferers, did more than the DON, and that quietly, too. One, for instance, paid all the expenses of the entertainment given to collect supporters for them; and another, for a similar purpose, gave certain advantages which it was well known, could be ill spared. But the DON looked to himself, and made his charity the vehicle of a self-display, which could not have been made, otherwise, without loss. To be sure, he set a laudable example in seconding a subscription of five pieces of money; and as he wrote down his name, chuckled exceedingly, and exclaimed, parodying a saying left on record in the archives of the castle, by his predecessor, FALSTAFF:—"*If I'm not liberal myself, I'm the cause of liberality in others*,"—and strutted away, looking very much pleased, and actually fancying himself the most generous and best-hearted DON in the world.

Said "Let there be no drinking in these days,
Because on virtue wine is apt to trample."

It was ordered that spirituous liquors should not be suffered to come into the

castle; and one of the DON'S mercenaries hit upon an expedient, which gave infinite pleasure to his companions, because the DON'S allowance to his followers was by no means such as to enable them to regale very expensively.—It seems there was always plenty of smoking hot brandy-and-water in the apartments of state. The mercenary to whom I allude, inserted a pipe in the wall to carry off the "enlivening airs," and all whose souls were "deprest with care," even they "exalted" themselves plentifully from the mouth of the aforesaid pipe, over which was inscribed, in letters beautifully daubed by a journeyman scene painter,—

HOW TO GET DRUNK BY STEAM.

VER. VI.

*He loved his **** and ******** very much.———*

Here is a lamentable hiatus in the manuscript, which my friend Mr. CALEB CROSS-STICKS, who has "talent for an epic," is endeavouring to supply. The reader may depend on receiving the result of his researches.

And fir'd the DON *to add a cubit to his fame!*

Is not this a *Jewish* measure? And though there is neither date nor place affixed to this poem, I should infer that the story must be of Jewish origin, especially as the DON'S character partakes so much of the Hebrew style, that he gained great credit at an antient masquerade *by playing the Jew*, in which a contemporary critic was pleased to observe, "he seemed perfectly at home."

VER. VII.

If I rouse him—get out! or, I'll DUET.

There cannot be a doubt that the true reading here is—*do it*, but if poetry be the offspring of fancy, learning, and lofty contemplation, I do aver that my friend Lord GRIZZLE, by this metathesis, has achieved the highest beauty of his art.

Your knight may be d——d!

Notwithstanding this unequivocal expression, it is said that the DON fined one of his followers ten and a half pieces of silver, for having been heard to swear. The follower, it seems was, as *Mercutio* says, "a very tall man," and the Chief Janissary a very short one. The Janissary had for some years worn a jacket, which was growing rather rusty; and when the reign of liberality commenced, the DON ordered a new jacket to be made for this Chief Janissary. But was the old one to be thrown away?—Oh, no!—So, in the chances of war, this unfortunate old jacket of the Chief Janissary was sent to the long follower. He strained, and pulled, and at last, when the jacket was drawn out to the utmost, though it was as tight as a drum, or as alderman SUB'S rosy cheeks, with his mouth full of plumb pudding, yet three quarters of the long follower's "many a rood" of limb were naked; then, the long follower lost all patience, and cried out "d—n it!"—The news was instantly carried to the DON, who went into a rage, and ordered a fine to be levied, vociferating—"*H—ll and the d—l!—No man but myself shall be suffered to swear here, I'll be d—d if he shall.*" It

must be confessed that the DON was always remarkable both for the studied courtliness and *decency* of his conversation.

VER. VIII.

Now came the mighty moment:—but the tale
Of deeds ensuing mayn't be mentioned now.———

My worthy friend, the author of that "right pithy, pleasant, and merry comedy, entituled—"Gammer Gurton's Needle," in the *second acte*, and the *first sceane*, remarketh as follows:

———this is a matter of weight, and must be kept close;
It might else turn to both our costs, as the world now goes.

PERORATION.

In the future cantos occasion will be given for a very thorough history of the DON'S liberal mode of constructing all laws, in his own favour; how he made the law speak for him on one side, and a year after that, on the other; the whole of his argument with a learned burgess, to prove that no law could *hold* good, or possibly *be* good, which interfered with his pocket, and that what would be the grossest despotism and meanness in another, is nothing at all but liberality in him. These and various other matters will supply a few more ponderous quartos of illustration. For the present, gentle reader, good bye.

COBHOUSE.

Theatrical Inquisition.

Hic patet ingeniis campus: certusque merenti
Stat favor: ornatur propriis industria donis.—CLAUDIAN.

KING'S THEATRE.

JAN. 1. Nozze di Figaro; Divertisement; Sultan Generous.
8. Cenerentola; Ibid; Ibid.
15. Ibid; Ibid; Telemaque.
22. Ibid; Ibid; Ibid.

THEATRE ROYAL DRURY-LANE.

JAN. 1. Suspicious Husband; Jack and the Bean-Stalk.
3. Siege of Belgrade; Ibid.
4. Country Girl; Ibid.
5. Guy Mannering—*Dominie Sampson*, Mr. LISTON;*—Ibid.
6. Wild Oats; Ibid.
7. Country Girl; Ibid.
8. Guy Mannering—*Dominie Sampson*, Mr. RUSSELL;—Ibid.
10. Siege of Belgrade; Ibid.
11. Wild Oats; Ibid.
12. Guy Mannering; Ibid.

* By permission, on account of Mr. OXBERRY'S illness, owing to which Mr. BUTLER sustained his character of *Justice Greedy*.

13. Three and the Deuce; Rival Soldiers; Ibid.
14. Devil's Bridge; Ibid.
15. Gallantry; or, Adventures in Madrid—*Don Presto*, Mr. ELLISTON; *Don Retardo*, Mr. HARLEY: *Don Amoretto*, Mr. MUNDEN; *Don Diego* Mr. DOWTON; *Perequito*, Mr. KNIGHT; *Don Hectorio*, Mr. RUSSELL; *Vasques*, Mr. HUGHES; *Don Ferdinand*, Mr. BARNARD; *Don Manuel*, Mr. POWELL; *Almanzor*, Mr. FOOTE; *Don Lewis*, Mr. ELLIOTT; *Don Velasques* Mr. VINING; *Donna Octavia*, Mrs. EDWIN; *Constantia*, Mrs. W. WEST; *Picquet*, Miss KELLY; *Beatrice*, Mrs. HARLOWE; *Hostess*, Mrs. PEARCE;—Prologue spoken by Mr. BARNARD; Epilogue by Mrs. EDWIN;—Ibid.
17. Richard the Third—*Richmond*, Mr. PENLEY;—Ibid.
18. Wild Oats—*Ephraim Smooth*, Mr. BUTLER;*—Ibid.
19. New Way to Pay Old Debts—*Justice Greedy*, Mr. BUTLER;—Ibid.
20. Dramatist; Tribute to St. Cecilia; Ibid.—*Benefit of the Destitute and Houseless.*
21. Othello; Ibid.
22. Guy Mannering; Ibid.
24. No Performance.†

JACK AND THE BEAN STALK.

SATURDAY, *January* 1.—This mass of incongruities was produced in seventeen days, maugre all its vaunted preparation, and though but a sorry effort, is fully equal, we admit, to the childish appetite for such puerile entertainment. Miss POVEY, though most improperly condemned to the duties of pantomime, delighted us with the admirable properties of her improving voice, and BOLOGNA's *Harlequin* partook of that graceful agility by which his motley personations have so long been distinguished. The scenery exhibits one pleasing specimen,—an expanding bay,—which we have previously seen in the "Fisherman's Hut," but is marked by no leading trait in any other instance, beyond that miserable daubing by which the paintings at this house are proverbially decried.

COUNTRY GIRL.

TUESDAY, *January* 4.—WYCHERLEY's "Country Wife," though a production of great wit and gaiety, distinguished by powerful character, and replete with energetic language, was so thoroughly unfitted for the pure purposes of modern representation, that GARRICK remodelled it in the year 1766, at which period it was played most successfully, and has often been revived with unabating applause.

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* Owing to Mr. MUNDEN's indisposition.

† Owing to the death of his Royal Highness the duke of KENT.

Wycherley, with all the advantages of birth, breeding, accomplishments, and fortune, broke into the great circle of polished society, soon after the restoration of that royal profligate, whose example made vices of every sort the most desirable additions to a courtly character. Relinquishing the legal studies for which he had been intended, to pursue those buoyant objects that were more agreeable to his lively genius, and better corresponded with the taste of the age, Mr. Wycherley applied himself to dramatic writing, and has produced four of the most licentious comedies by which the English stage has perhaps ever been polluted. By the success of his first drama he procured a passport to more than one species of fashionable intercourse,—being honoured with the attentions of literary eminence, and admitted to the arms of voluptuous love. The duke of Buckingham, and the duchess of Cleveland respectively extended their notice, and even king Charles bestowed a most uncommon mark of princely favour.* Among the most romantic turns of his singular history, is Mr. Wycherley's marriage with a young, beautiful, rich, and widowed Countess, upon whom he was absolutely pushed by the boldness of a bookseller.† The king, however, having regarded this union with displeasure, Mr. Wycherley was discarded from court, and after undergoing the various hardships of debt, poverty, imprisonment, and disgrace, he died in the seventy-fifth year of his age, without much veneration for his talents, or sympathy with his misfortunes.

As a writer, William Wycherley maintains no established rank among the dramatists of his country, his plays being destitute of any other requisites, to a certain extent, than sketches of contemporary manners, and facilities for local amusement. *Mrs.*

* "Mr. Wycherley being ill of a fever, at his lodgings in Bow-street, the king did him the honour of a visit."—"*Biographia Dramatica.*"

† "He went down to Tunbridge, where walking one day upon the Wells-walk, with his friend Mr. Fairbeard, of Gray's-inn, just as he came up to the bookseller's shop, the countess of Drogheda, a young widow, rich, noble, and beautiful, came there to inquire for the 'Plain-dealer.'—'Madam,' said Mr. Fairbeard, 'since you are for the 'Plain-dealer,' there he is for you;' pushing Mr. Wycherley towards her. 'Yes,' said Mr. Wycherley, 'this lady can bear plain-dealing, for she appears to be so accomplished, that what would be a compliment to others, would be plain-dealing to her.'—'No, truly, sir,' said the countess, 'I am not without my faults, any more than the rest of my sex; and yet, notwithstanding, I love plain-dealing, and am never more fond of it, than when it tells me of them.'—'Then, madam,' said Mr. Fairbeard, 'you and the 'Plain-dealer' seem designed by heaven for each other.' '—*Ibid.*

Pinchwife, the prototype of GARRICK's *Miss Peggy*, is thought to be borrowed from MOLIERE's "Ecole des Femmes," a liberty, which considering the reputation of French pieces, in our author's time, was of very probable occurrence, and may claim a partial excuse. Banishment from the stage should be deemed, it is true, no remote reason for the loss of popularity; but we believe, on account of the causes already ascribed, that if the whole of WYCHERLEY's pieces were honoured with gallery applause for a hundred nights together, not one of them would catch the *aura popularis* with any chance of retaining it, or move majestically down the tide of permanent consideration.

Since the best days of Mrs. JORDAN, whose excellence in the heroine of this comedy was undeniable, we have seen nothing that could cope with Miss KELLY's mode of representing its archness and rusticity. We cannot, however, admit that *Peggy* even here, though skilfully pourtrayed, was a faultless personation, and yet should be embarrassed to specify the particular points in which it was materially defective. Improvement it certainly is susceptible of, and with our consciousness of Miss KELLY's ardour in pursuit of professional truth, we relinquish the character to her sound judgment, for deep and diligent consideration.

Moody is an assumption that has never sat easy upon any of its representatives in our time, Mr. WROUGHTON perhaps excepted, whose traditional talent, or art of duly recollecting, enabled him to give a respectable embodiment of *Moody's* untangible peculiarities. Mr. DOWTON, an actor of unparalleled merit in chuckling heartiness, or vehement irascibility, was by no means adjusted to such a task, and we are inclined to think that Mr. MUNDEN, whose illness withheld him from the part, would have been more successful in its delineation. Of *Harcourt* or *Belville*, as undertaken by Messrs. PENLEY and BARNARD, we can urge but little in malice, nor set down aught in commendation; against Mr. RUSSELL's *Sparkish*, however, it is our duty to protest, not merely on account of his performance, which it is charity in criticism to neglect, but from the injustice that is done by that gentleman's assumption of a character, which should certainly devolve, so far as individual fitness deserves to be considered, upon the youth, person, and powers of Mr. HARLEY.

Under the "personal superintendence of Mr. ELLISTON," some subaltern wag has appended the following notice to his exquisite play-bills:

Mr. DOWTON, Mr. PENLEY, Mr. RUSSELL, Miss KELLY, *and the rest of the dramatis personæ*, in the comedy of the "Country Girl," were received on Tuesday evening with the most marked approbation by an audience crowded in every part.

i. e. Messrs. MORETON, HUDSON, WIBER, and MAXWELL, the understrappers of this piece, were received with all the brilliancy which attended their more prominent coadjutors, and we therefore take permission, in strict reliance upon Mr. ELLISTON's testimony, to return our thanks to the first gentleman for his energy in the *Footman*, to the second for his gracefulness in the *Countryman*, to the third for his spirit in *William*, and to the fourth for his pathos in *John*; and this eulogium we will warrant to be little less correct than half the nonsense that is lavished in large letters upon even Mr. KEAN, the modest manager himself, or the most sycophantic of his satellites.

GALLANTRY; OR, ADVENTURES IN MADRID.

SATURDAY, *January* 15.—A new comedy, which, notwithstanding the dubious testimony of newspaper denial, we have some reason to believe, in being laid to the charge of Mr. OULTON, has been correctly ascribed, was produced, upon this occasion, from the following materials:

Don Manuel an ambitious old man, is bent upon uniting his daughter, *Constantia*, to *Don Amoretto*, an aged pretender to her hand. The lady, who is naturally averse to the match, bestows her affections upon *Don Ferdinand*, the son of this antiquated lover, who is only known to her as a poor student of Salamanca. *Don Diego*, a choleric old gentleman, is mean-while determined that *Octavia*, his daughter, shall take the veil in a convent at Seville, where she had been seen by *Don Presto*, a species of animated tetotum, who having been enamoured of her beauty, reaches Madrid in hope of seeing her, though without any clue to accelerate his search. A chain of circumstances, however, atlength conducts him to her presence, where he successfully pleads his suit, and persuades her to elope with him in the very chaise her father had prepared for proceeding to the convent, By this scheme he discomfits one rival, in the person of his brother, *Don Retardo*, a dull plodding coxcomb, and the aforesaid *Don Amoretto*, who, failing in his suit with *Constantia*, has made an effort to retrieve the disappointment, by addressing her cousin, *Octavia*.

This plot ran on without interruption, till many of its hearers were exhausted, and when the curtain dropped, a very powerful contest commenced between its partizans and opposers. The epilogue was spoken by Mrs. EDWIN, which as it unfortunately dealt in appeals, gave rise to many prompt and pertinent answers from

the pit, that ultimately grew into an actual dialogue, and the merits of the play were canvassed by this spontaneous species of question and answer. At the termination of this epilogue, Mr. ELLISTON came forward, and the clamour that ensued upon his appearance was loud and lasting. Silence being obtained, he spoke as follows:

LADIES and GENTLEMEN:—It is my duty to prevent all unnecessary contention, and I therefore beg to inform you that this comedy is withdrawn. *(applause.)* At the same time I feel for the author, and wish that a further trial might be allowed him.—*(cries of* "No! No! the play's too bad.") It is difficult to write a good comedy, but still harder, let may say, to judge of it. *(Signs of displeasure and dissent from this audacious opinion.)* I have now had more than twenty years' experience of the stage and its productions, and have often known incidents and situations that gave displeasure on a first night, afterwards received with applause or indulgence. In my address at the beginning of the season, I said that these doors should ever be open to genius. I considered this production worthy of your acceptance, and therefore, presented it; but as I perceive your opinion is against me, I bow to your decision.

Such was the fate of this unfortunate effort, which Mr. ELLISTON, anxiously expanding the portals of his Drury-lane establishment for the admission of genius, has added to a long line of tasteless selection, and public failure. His contumacy in maintaining its frivolous pretensions against the fiat of an impartial audience, whose faculty of discernment he even ventured to impugn, demands the most indignant notice, as a shameless breach of that humility, which in appearance at least, he is bound to evince towards those by whose favour he is supported. Vice, like virtue, covers a multitude of sins, and hypocrisy will sometimes go farther than charity, when her mask and mantle are carefully preserved. The friends of Mr. ELLISTON have obtained a clue to the real arrogance of his character, which we trust will be followed up till it leads to such developments as will cast a bitter reproach upon the blindness of their judgment, while it yields additional light to the lustre of their generosity.

CHARITABLE BENEFIT

THURSDAY, *January* 20.—Mr. ELLISTON, from an impulse which exhibits no blamable yearning after popularity, gave the *profits* of this performance, when all expenses had been deducted, to a laudable institution in the city for sheltering the houseless, and solacing the distressed. Previous to the comedy, which the newspapers assured us, was "admirably performed," Mrs. WEST recited an "address" from the pen of one Mr. THOMSON, which was

received with prodigious favour, and only wants the requisite of poetry to claim a corner in our columns. A "Tribute" occurred in the course of this eventful evening, to "St Cecilia," for which the various performers, immusical and otherwise, were arrayed in the most *imposing* manner, around the finely-proportioned figures of their great head, and his assistant manager. By these "full-dressed" individuals, St. Cecilia was delighted with "Savourneen Deelish," "Robin Adair," a few comic ditties, and some other well-adapted specimens of British lyrical power. The whole mummery concluded, as it should do, with a *farce*, and from this series of absurdities more than one hundred and fifty pounds have been collected for the purpose alluded to.

CORIOLANUS.

TUESDAY, *January* 25.—It has been said that the only play which SHAKSPEARE finished with peculiar solicitude was "King Henry VIII.," and it is remarkable that it is almost the only one of his plays which retains possession of the stage, nearly in its original state. We may go further. It is the only play which ought to stand, as it is given by the author. Dramatic taste is changed since the time of SHAKSPEARE, and if it is permitted to touch his plays at all, there is no reason why they should be accommodated to the demands of more disciplined judgments only in part. That which would have been most attractive at the Globe Theatre, could not, and ought not, to be tolerated at Drury-lane or Covent-garden. Mr. ELLISTON, in causing the original of SHAKSPEARE to be pruned by Mr. SOANE, professes to have acted with a scrupulous regard for the sacredness of SHAKSPEARE'S text: it would not do to suffer a syllable of THOMSON to appear at the same time, and yet Mr. SOANE himself interpolates his author with a long ode of his own ! ! ! Now whether Mr. ELLISTON, or Mr. SOANE himself, thought—"GEORGE SOANE, A. B." a fitter partner for SHAKSPEARE than the poet of the "Seasons," we will not undertake to say ; but certain it is that the bills preserve the alliteration of SHAKSPEARE and SOANE, and poor THOMSON is thrust into the back-ground.

The combination of SHAKSPEARE and THOMSON adopted by KEMBLE as his own, was, we believe, framed by SHERIDAN, the actor ; a man pre-eminently fitted for the task, both by literary and dramatic knowledge. It is admirably done, and will retain permanent possession of the stage ; for we cannot think, nor wish, that

Mr. KEAN should force a run for the play as adapted by Mr. SOANE. To say that Mr. KEAN deserved applause in the part, would be to mislead public taste, and grossly to flatter him. There were touches to afford a pretext for the clamourous applause of Mr. KEAN's party, but every thing he did may be found in other characters, much better applied; and, in short, the whole performance was *Sir Giles Overreach*, or *Richard the Third*, or *Sir Edward Mortimer*, but not *Coriolanus*. In thus saying, we do not mean to try him by the standard of KEMBLE, but by our own impressions of the truth of the character. *Coriolanus* towered, like a mighty mountain, above common men, and his passion, like the blaze shooting up and spreading beyond the clouds, from the volcano at the mountain's top, was vast, desolating, and sublime: it sprang from the elevation of his soul, not the distempered phrenzy of personal annoyance, or disappointment. Mr. KEAN was sulky, fretful, bitter, and frequently in a very, very great passion, but never grand.

The very sarcasm of *Coriolanus* is of a different complexion from the sarcasm of meaner characters. In other parts, bitter things are said that they may wound bitterly; but *Coriolanus* cares not to wage a war of words for the sake of petty triumph, and though what he says stings because it is truth spoken fearlessly, he says it because he feels it, and without thinking of the effect. It is mere downright sincerity, and sometimes defiance, rather than reproach. Mr. KEMBLE, in the dialogue with the citizens, hurried over the address, like a disagreeable lesson spoken carelessly and quickly in order to get rid of it, but Mr. KEAN was surly, and his repetitions of the phrase, "voices," were the tauntings of morbid sensitiveness, not the indifference of a towering spirit which disdained the rabble it must court, and consequently would disdain to goad it with enforced reproaches. The exquisite quietness and speaking smile of KEMBLE in "Alone I did it.—Boy!—" cannot be named at the same moment with the blustering—"Alone—I—I—I—I—did it" of Mr. KEAN.—The one was a mighty mind betrayed unwillingly into the expression of an exulting consciousness of his great deeds, the other the egotism of an enraged bully.

The success of Mr. KEAN's applauded personation of *Brutus*, has probably led him into this attempt; but Mr. KEAN ought to remember that the double character of *Brutus*, and his rapid transitions of passion, are adapted to his own peculiar characteristics; and that the requisites of *Coriolanus* are diametrically at variance with the powers of KEAN. We saw MR. KEMBLE's performance

of *Richard* on the night he was grossly insulted by Mr. KEAN's partizans; but though we regretted and felt ashamed of the insults, we equally regretted that Mr. KEMBLE should not have resigned a part in which, according to the general opinion, he was certainly far, very far surpassed. We must now reverse the cases. We regret that Mr. KEAN should have shown an ambition so monopolizing, without being competent to sustain the encounter. The reluctant applause and forced acclamation of hundreds will never make Mr. KEAN popular in *Coriolanus*;—if they could, it would discover a want of nice criticism in the British audience, of which we will yet hope it cannot justly be accused.

The late period in the month of the production of this play, renders it necessary for us to dismiss the subject here, with a promise to resume it in our next.

THEATRE ROYAL COVENT-GARDEN.

JAN. 1. Comedy of Errors; Harlequin and Don Quixote.
3. Mary Stuart; Ibid.
4. Comedy of Errors; Ibid.
5. Steward; Ibid.
6. Rob Roy; Ibid.
7. Confederacy; Ibid.
8. Marriage of Figaro; Short Reign and a Merry One; Ibid.
10. Comedy of Errors; Ibid.
11. As you like it—*Rosalind* Miss WENSLEY; *Jaques*, Mr. MACREADY;—Ibid.
12. Comedy of Errors; Ibid.
13. As you like it; Ibid.
14. Comedy of Errors; Ibid.
15. Guy Mannering—*Henry Bertram*, Mr. NATHAN;—Ibid,
17. Comedy of Errors; Ibid.
18. As you like it; Ibid.
19. Rob Roy; Ibid.
20. Much ado about Nothing—*Beatrice*, Miss WENSLEY;—Ibid.
21. Comedy of Errors; Ibid.
22. Isabella—*Isabella*, Mrs. De JERSEY BEAUMONT;—Ibid.
24. No Performance.*

MARY STUART, QUEEN OF SCOTLAND.

MONDAY, *January* 3.—This is the play about which some angry observations passed between Miss O' NEILL and Mrs. BUNN, not many months ago, when the former lady declined acting the part

* Owing to the death of his Royal Highness the duke of KENT.

which Miss MACAULEY has been expresly engaged to perform. The wisdom of that refusal has been forcibly manifested by subsequent circumstances, or the individual alluded to must submit to a load of responsibility, far beyond the weight she has hitherto been unable to sustain.

Queen Elizabeth, to whom *Mary Stuart* had fled for protection upon her defeat in Scotland, avails herself of that opportunity to hold the unfortunate refugee a close prisoner in Fotheringay-castle, for many years, during which period the captive sovereign was tried for treasonable practices, and condemned to death. The events which precipitate this catastrophe result from the unavailing attempts of *Sir Edward Mortimer* to effect her rescue, for the accomplishment of which purpose, he deceives his uncle, *Sir Amias Paulet*, the gaoler of *Mary*, procures an interview, and ascertains that her hopes of freedom rest entirely upon the *Earl of Leicester*. He delivers a letter from *Mary* to this nobleman, who readily concurs in his views, and artfully arranges a meeting between *Elizabeth* and her prisoner, in the grounds about Fotheringay-castle. Here an attempt upon *Elizabeth's* life is attributed, by *Burleigh*, to *Mary's* authorised agents, and that minister having detected her correspondence with *Leicester*, the favourite, to secure his own safety, sacrifices *Mortimer* as an adherent to the sanguinary plan. Urged by *Burleigh*, and notwithstanding the remonstrance of *Shrewsbury*, or the distracted feelings of her own heart, *Elizabeth* at length signs the warrant for *Mary's* execution, and entrusts it to her secretary, *Davison*. By this tool of ministerial power it is given up to *Burleigh*, and he, claiming the company of *Leicester*, in pursuance of the queen's commission, sets out for Fotheringay-castle, sees the sentence put in force, and leaves *Elizabeth* to an agony of contending emotions, when she finds that *Mary* was guiltless of *Burleigh's* fatal charge. *Leicester*, compelled to witness the last moments of a being endeared by her sorrows and beauty, falls a prey to bitter remorse, and the piece concludes.

Such is a scanty outline of the leading incidents adopted by Mr. REYNOLDS from a harsh and unpoetical translation of SCHILLER'S play, made anonymously in the year 1801. The original drama is among the weakest of its author's effusions, and though miserably mangled in the ordeal of representation, is still liable to the severest accusations of immoral argument, and historic infidelity. We have no room, however for a laboured essay upon its particular deficiencies, and having said a sentence or two in allusion to the performers, shall leave "Mary Stuart" to the eternal obscurity it has already attained.

If any thing could have added to the "deep damnation" of this atrocious tragedy, that corroborative might have been found in Miss MACAULEY'S acting, which harmonized in the minutest particular with every particle of disgust by which its sluggish scenes

were pervaded. This Lady has bidden farewell to the metropolitan drama, and we hope finally, because such a consummation is the only means that Miss MACAULEY possesses of saving her dulness from severity, and her presumption from exposure. Miss FOOTE has succeeded, for a night or two, to the character, and looked *Mary, Queen of Scots*, like a huge waxen image in a milliner's window. Mrs. BUNN was more tolerable in the laborious *Elizabeth* than we have recently been accustomed to see her; Mr. MACREADY supported *Leicester*, though in vain, with laudable sincerity; Mr. C. KEMBLE made a gallant representative of the enthusiastic *Mortimer*; and we liked the iron sternness of Mr. TERRY's *Paulet* much better than any personation with which a whole evening of penance has made us acquainted.

CONFEDERACY.

FRIDAY, *January* 7.—Sir JOHN VANBRUGH had certainly more wit than grace, as the satirist avows, though we cannot think the present production, in which those valuable attributes are both most licentiously displayed, will authorize the very severe denunciation by which it has been followed. The "Confederacy" is an improved version of D' ANCOURT's "*Bourgeoises a la Mode*," and though distinguished by easy incident, natural character, and appropriate diction, is not entitled to rank among the most meritorious of its author's productions.

We failed in realizing our wishes, from want of space, to give such a view of this play, in the warmth of its revival, as the excellence with which, in three or four parts, it was sustained, would not otherwise have justified us in omitting. Mr. EMERY invested *Gripe* with those traits of harsh, unbending humour, which no comedian before us can so powerfully communicate, and Mr. FARREN we have never seen to half the advantage with which he appeared as *Moneytrap*, the doating, deluded, and usurious votary of illicit love. Mrs. GIBBS was entirely at home in the *Waiting-maid*, and Miss FOOTE's *Corinna* was precisely such an effort as must awaken expectation, and should stimulate encouragement. The play has not been attractive, nor can any composition of its peculiar species be looked to for success, while the managers of our national drama are suffered to set reason so often at defiance, and vitiate the public taste with impunity.

AS YOU LIKE IT.

TUESDAY, *January* 11.—A Miss WENSLEY, from Somersetshire, whose bias for the stage had previously led her to the tuition of Mrs. C. KEMBLE, was this evening thrust upon these boards in the part of *Rosalind*, to see how far such a personation could be sanctioned by the folly or forbearance of public discernment. Abetted by the newspaper press, whose invariable prostitution to the purposes of managerial cupidity reflects such a hideous stigma upon the name of criticism itself, Miss WENSLEY made a temporary stand against the feelings of insulted justice, without one particle of grace, gaiety, or humour, for the arduous duties she had so daringly assumed. We cannot pay her presumptuous imbecility the harsh compliment of minute exposure, and shall therefore inform our readers that this amiable novice made her final curtsey to the Covent-garden audience, as what ought to have been the *Beatrice* of SHAKSPEARE, about ten days since, in a comedy most appropriately distinguished by the title of "Much ado about nothing." We do not see how the hireling avouchers of Miss WENSLEY's success can get over such an evidence of failure, but the public, we trust, will begin to take warning against the slightest reliance upon their detestable venality.

GUY MANNERING.

SATURDAY, *January* 15.—Mr. NATHAN, a gentleman of some musical reputation, which has been perilously endangered by the effort we are about to record, made his début as *Henry Bertram*, the hero of this opera, and failed so completely in every essential of the part, that we shall not aggravate his mortification by dwelling upon such irretrievable disgrace. He has since published an epistle, announcing his intention to make another essay, in the character of *Macbeath*, and we entertain a sincere hope that this future experiment may be borne out by a more favourable conclusion.

THEATRICAL CHIT-CHAT.

Mr. MATHEWS's entertainment will commence about the 20th of February. Having collected characters and incidents from every part of the country he has visited, since the close of his last performance, a fresh exhibition of his unrivalled powers will be opened to the public, interspersed, it is said, with songs of peculiar pungency, and fraught with more points of originality and amusement, than even either of his periodical efforts have hitherto displayed.

HEWITT, PRINTER, 145, HIGH HOLBORN.